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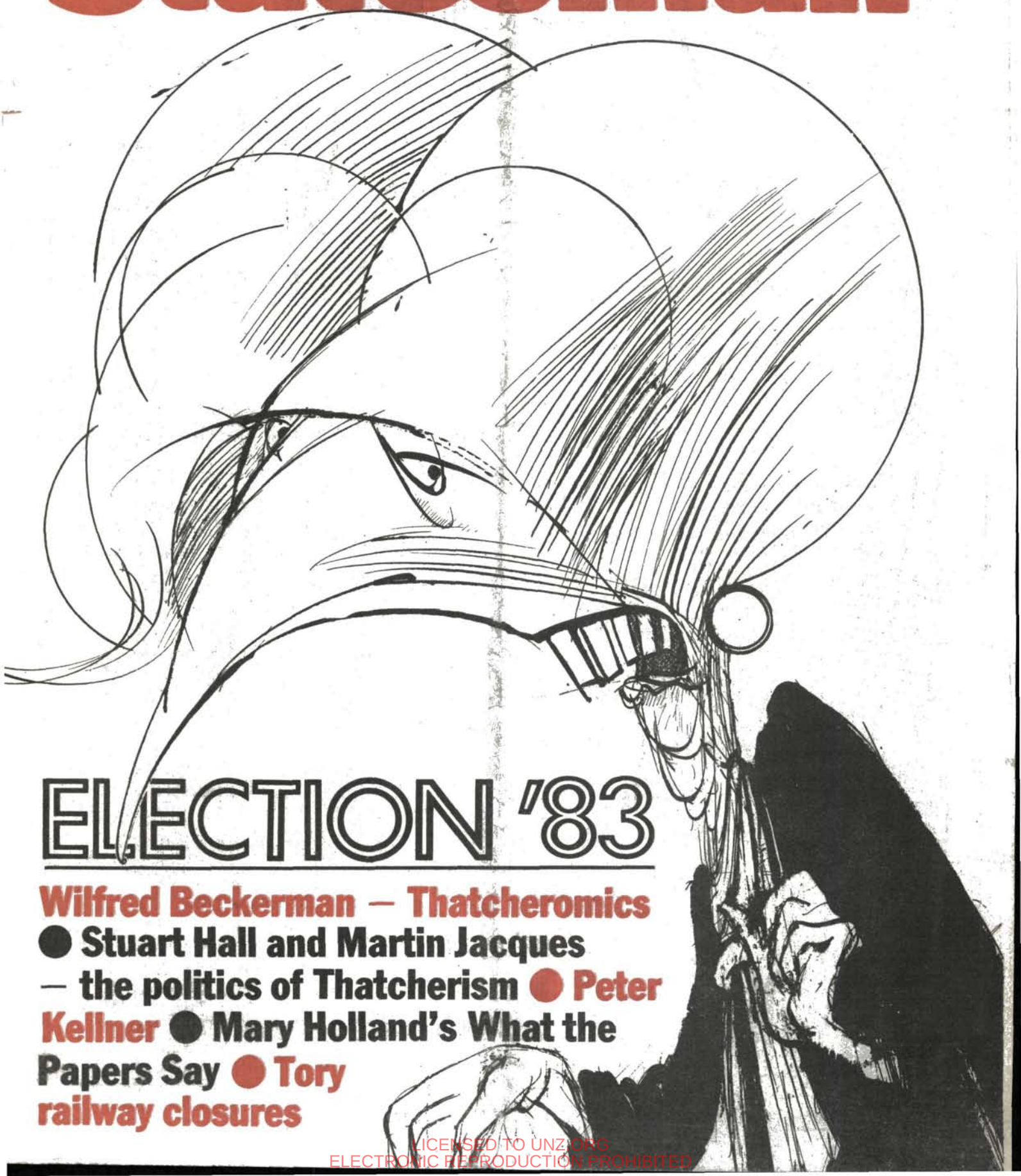

ELECTION '83

Wilfred Beckerman — Thatcheromics ● Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques — the politics of Thatcherism ● Peter Kellner ● Mary Holland's What the Papers Say ● Tory railway closures

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New Statesman

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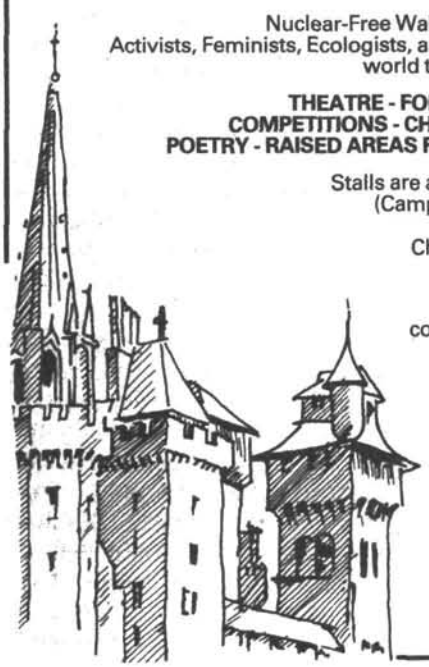

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ELECTION '83

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New Statesman Vol 105 No 2722 20 May 1983

A wholly justified obsession

IN THE DYING stages of the last Parliament, the Foreign Office Minister of State, Mr Cranley Onslow, accused Mr Tam Dalyell of 'persuing a disgraceful vendetta against the Prime Minister' over the sinking last May of the Argentine cruiser, the *General Belgrano*. In Mr Onslow's view Mr Dalyell's persistence 'comes close to being a gross abuse of the procedures of the House'.

Mr Dalyell is certainly an obsessive politician. This fact has enabled his political opponents to shrug off the seriousness of his charges. It has also been an excuse for his political friends not to give him the support his case deserves. Yet it has been clear from the moment that the cruiser was sunk that the government was very uncomfortable about what had happened. Its explanations were unsatisfactory and incomplete from the start. The official story has been constantly changing, which is usually a sign that an account of events is being manufactured after the event in order to meet political requirements. Since Mr Dalyell's charge is nothing less than that the Prime Minister and a small group of ministers around her (not including the Foreign Secretary, Mr Francis Pym) deliberately authorised the sinking of the *Belgrano* because they were more interested in a military than in a diplomatic solution to the Falklands crisis, it deserves proper investigation by some form of official enquiry. The Franks Report, which in its detail though not in its conclusions was damning enough of the way in which Mrs Thatcher and her government conducted the rapidly escalating Falklands crisis, stopped its investigations at the point of the Argentinian invasion – as it was required to do by its carefully drafted terms of reference. With Mr Dalyell's specific and appalling charge, many of those involved as officials and serving officers are for the moment silenced. The politicians involved have an understandable, if not admirable, reluctance to say anything that might damage the Tory Party or Mrs Thatcher personally. But the *prima facie* evidence to support Mr Dalyell's charge is now so strong that he must not rest until the truth is established.

The essential facts are these. On Saturday, 1 May last year the Foreign Secretary flew to Washington for a desperate last minute attempt to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. On the same day President Belaunde of Peru and the American Secretary of State Haig began the task of acting as brokers between Argentina and the United Kingdom. On his arrival in Washington, Mr Pym told a press conference that British attacks that day on the Falklands had been intended to concentrate Argentinian minds on a peaceful settlement.

He then said: 'No further military action is envisaged at the moment, except to keep the exclusion zone secure'. Over the next 24 hours significant advances were made in the Belaunde-Haig negotiations, resulting in a draft seven point agreement, which was later the basis of an interim agreement which the British government (after the sinking of the *Belgrano*) was to say it found acceptable. But on Sunday, 2 May, without apparently consulting Mr Pym, Mrs Thatcher and a small group of ministers at Chequers gave the order to sink the *Belgrano*. She was sunk later that day.

Those are the facts. In the absence of a proper inquiry the rest remains speculation. The speculation, however, is fuelled by the nature of the government's explanations. These, as put forward by the Prime Minister and Mr Onslow in the House last week, rest on two assertions. The first is that the Peruvian seven point peace plan was not telexed to London until after the *Belgrano* had been sunk and that until then the Prime Minister did not know that the peace talks were getting anywhere. The second is that the *Belgrano* was sunk 'for military reasons and the treat was real'.

The first excuse is entirely irrelevant. It is perfectly possible that the *text* of the seven point plan did not reach London until long after the sinking. But it is not conceivable, given the critical nature of events and the speed with which they were developing, that Mr Pym and the British Embassy in Washington were not keeping London informed of developments during that Saturday and Sunday. In any case, if they were strangely silent, it beggars belief to suggest that London was not trying to find out what was happening in Washington. The only explanation that fits such a suggestion is that London was not interested.

THE REASONS given for the actual sinking of the *Belgrano* have never been convincing. The cruiser and her escorts were a long way outside the exclusion zone. They were steaming away from it. There were no British surface units anywhere near. It is not at all surprising, once the submarine HMS *Conqueror* had found the *Belgrano,* that the military should make a case to the War Cabinet that the existing rules of engagement should be set aside and the cruiser sunk.

But that is precisely why the military need to be under political control. For in the circumstances of 1 and 2 May last year the sinking of the *Belgrano,* miles outside the exclusion zone, was a highly political act. If there was any chance of an acceptable peace settlement, the Prime Minister should not have authorised the sinking. She must have known what the effect of such action would be. If she did not bother to inform herself of the peace negotiations before giving her permission, she was nothing short of criminally negligent.

The *only* even conceivable grounds for agreeing to the navy's request that day would have been if the *Belgrano* genuinely represented a real and *immediate* threat to British forces. This could be established quite easily by publishing the track of the *Belgrano* for the 48 hours before she was sunk. This the government strangely refuses to do on the grounds that the information is 'operational'.

It is the flimsiest excuse. The Argentines (and for that matter by satellite the Americans and the Russians) know where the Belgrano was during that period. The only reasonable conclusion is that the government is silent on the point because the facts further undermine its justification for an act that made the full-scale Falklands war inevitable. The conclusion is impossible to avoid that Mrs Thatcher and her War Cabinet were so committed to a military solution that by 2 May their minds were shut to the possibility of a negotiated outcome. It seems that by that stage she wanted her war and was determined to get it. Those who died, the Falkland islanders and the British taxpayer will have paid her price. □

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American right organises Essex seminar on nuclear ethics

A HUSH HUSH conference organised by a right-wing American pressure group has been taking place in Britain all week at the secluded country mansion, Down Hall, Hadfield Green, Essex. The conference, on 'Ethics and Nuclear Arms', was funded by the US Information Agency, the British Atlantic Committee and the Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies. It was designed, wrote the organiser, to 'help highly-placed and influential religious leaders in Western Europe to gain a solid understanding of US defence and arms control policies.'

One influential 'religious leader' invited by the organisers was Selwyn Gummer, a Conservative junior minister who put his party's case to last December's Church of England General Synod on disarmament. In the event, Gummer was unable to attend.

Although the participants, who were expected to achieve 'an intense interaction' with each other during the week, were supposed to be drawn from Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religions, most of those taking up the invitation were from Protestant churches. The seminar is the first of four; the other three will be held in Amsterdam, Bonn and Washington.

The man behind the seminars, and a speaker at this week's, is Ernest W. Lefever who was refused a position in the Reagan Administration because his views on human rights and foreign policy were too right-wing. Lefever has set up the seminars through the Center for Ethics and Public Policy, of which he is President. The Center, with a 1983 income of $1,250,000, is one of a number of right-wing think tanks established at Georgetown University, Washington, following the election of President Carter.

What the American right found particularly upsetting about Carter was his linking human rights and US military and economic aid. Lefever used his position at the Center to make strident attacks on Carter's human rights criteria for foreign relations, and called for all human rights legislation to be 'removed from the statute book.' To counter the Carter policy, Lefever wrote an article in the right-wing Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review* arguing that the distinction should be between 'friendly authoritarian regimes' and 'hostile totalitarian' regimes. The former includes Chile and South Africa; the latter, China, Cuba and East European states. Lefever claims that this article became Reagan's ethical text for human rights.

Lefever and the Center have made 'ethical' stands on other controversial issues. The Center ran a campaign to counter claims that dried baby milk exports were linked to infant mortality in the Third World. Lefever has also tried to clean up the image of the CIA. He wrote a book, *The CIA and the American Ethic*, with Roy Godson. Godson is a member of the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence, which includes eight serving or former CIA officials. Lefever also testified to a Senate Select Committee considering a ban on the use of clergy by the CIA on the moral justification of CIA operatives disguising themselves as journalists or medical missionaries to gain access to an adversary's activities.

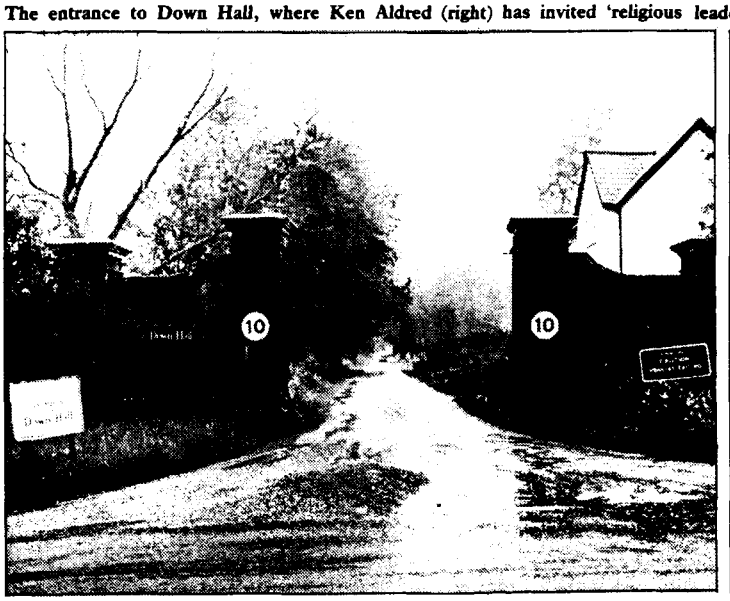
Reagan was anxious to include this morality expert in his administration as human rights adviser. This was too much for the Senate sub-committee, which rejected him by 13 votes to 4.

The administrator for the British 'Ethics and Nuclear Arms' conference was Ken Aldred. Aldred is General Secretary of the British Atlantic Committee's 'Peace through Nato' campaign, set up after the BAC was barred from political campaigning by the Charity Commissioners. Aldred said the conference was simply an 'ethical discussion' and that, far from being to counter disarmament arguments, 'people who support the nuclear freeze are attending.' He couldn't name any of them, but Michael Hare-Duke and members of the Scottish Episcopal peace project did attend.

The other group backing the seminar, the Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies (IEDSS) also has strong links with American hard-liners. The chairman is Edwin J. Feulner, President of the Heritage Foundation which claims the support of, and influence over, many in the Reagan Administration. Feulner sits on the Study Group on US Grand Strategy on which, according to US sources, the CIA is represented via the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University. IEDSS is based in the offices of the Institute for the Study of Conflict, and IEDSS's British director is Gerald Frost, late of the Conservative think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies.

Chris Horrie

The entrance to Down Hall, where Ken Aldred (right) has invited 'religious leaders'



Chris Davies/Network

Participants, Ethics and Nuclear Arms Conference, Down Hall, 16-20 May 1983

Andrew Acland
Ken Aldred, General Secretary, 'Peace through NATO'/British Atlantic Committee
Dr Digby Anderson
Cpt L A Bird (RN) Chairman, British Atlantic Committee, Dorset Branch
Rev W Bouder
Rev Dr Francis Bridger
Commander Thomas Bunn RN, Cambridge University
Rev John Clarke, Information Office, Scottish Episcopal Church
Rev Francis Edwards SJ, Society of Jesus
Dr Iain Elliot, Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies
Raymond English, Vice President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington
Ken Francis
Gerald Frost, Director, Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies; former Director, Centre for Policy Studies
Robert Gessert
Colin Gordon, Salford University
Rt Rev Michael Hare-Duke, Bishop of St Andrews, Scotland
Charlotte House, Assistant Director, British Atlantic Committee
Martin Ivens, Daily Telegraph
Canon N Jackson, Vicar of St Mary's Church, Nottingham
Jo James, Projects Officer, Scottish Episcopal Church
Dr Rogier Jobse, Netherlands Interchurch committee for multilateral disarmament
Sven Kraemer, Program Director, Washington Office of the National Strategy Information Center; Staff, Senate Republican Committee; Member, Consortium for the Study of Intelligence
Rev Alex Lawson
Vice-Admiral Louis Le Bailley, Board of Management, Institute for the Study of Conflict
Dr Ernest Lefever, Director, Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington
Maj Gen Fergus Ling, Defence Services Consultant, Institute for the Study of Conflict
Clifford Langley, The London Times
J Waxmore, Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies
Prof David Martin, Sociology Department, London School of Economics
Rev Richard Meuhause
Rev Dr Edward Norman, former Reith Lecturer
Rev Dr William Oddie
Paul Rippon, member of the C of E General Synod
Stanley Riveles
N A Serry
Rev Eddie Stride
Rachel Tingel, freelance journalist
T E Utley and Mrs Utley, Heritage Foundation, Washington
Rev Brian Whiting
Rev Patrick Whitworth
Fr Francis J Winters

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Beckett bends to Thatcher

SIR TERENCE BECKETT has been misusing the CBI's statistics to suggest that a strong economic recovery is under way. The Director General of the CBI, at a dinner in Kent on 14 April, forecast 'at least' 3.5 per cent growth in manufacturing output over the next 12 months, a figure which embarrassed CBI staff cannot easily explain.

Sir Terence's prediction, which was widely reported by the press, was based, according to the *Guardian*, on the early returns of the CBI's next industrial trends survey plus 'anecdotal evidence from businessmen'. But when the April industrial trends survey was published, on 26 April, the 3.5 per cent figure turned out to refer to the change between the average manufacturing output for the whole of 1983 and the average for the whole of 1984. His figures are therefore based on a two-year period, allowing him to include expected faster growth *up to the end of 1984* in order to suggest a strong recovery *this year*.

A CBI internal minute attempting to reconcile the CBI and its Director General explained his forecast as a quarter on quarter comparison, rather than year on year; but when contacted CBI staff were uncertain as to whether their leader had been comparing last quarter 1983 with last quarter 1982,

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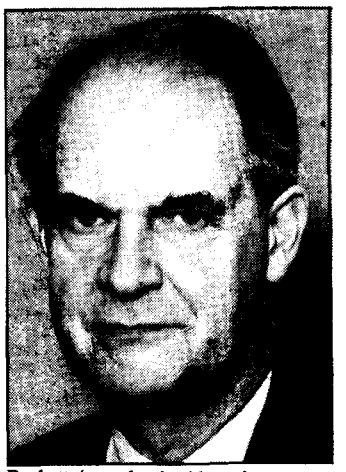
or first quarter 1984 with first quarter 1983.

The timing of Sir Terence's speech was crucial – just six days after lunch with the Prime Minister at Chequers and at the height of the press campaign for an early election. Election fever was partly the result in the first place of a series of optimistic economic forecasts at the start of the year. Both the CBI and the Treasury predicted that output as a whole in 1983 would be 2 per cent up on last year, the London Business School predicted 1.75 per cent and the National Institute for Economic and Social Research predicted 1.5 per cent.

The CBI's economic model is riddled with weaknesses: it is old (last properly updated in 1980) and relies more than most on 'exogenous' variables (those that are guesses rather than deduced from other figures); in the CBI model interest rates, exchange rates and wage levels are all exogenous, based on assumptions made by four people on a 'forecasts committee'. David Savage of the National Institute found this degree of exogeneity 'surprising', and Bill Robinson of the London Business School stressed the need for an exchange rate equation in any serious model.

The CBI's predicted 2.1 per cent output growth this year depends on a 3.4 per cent increase in exports, in turn dependent on an assumed parity value of the pound against major currencies of 80, whereas it now stands at 84. John Dunkley, the CBI's deputy director of information, rejected the charge that the variables could be adjusted to produce the required result as 'absolute nonsense'. He said: 'We have absolutely no vested interest in producing a desired result.'

He also pointed out that the model had a proven track record, and was consistently more accurate than other forecasts because of the valuable business data fed into it from the CBI's regular surveys of its members. This time may be different, because businesses are not asked to give an opinion on interest and exchange rates in the surveys. There is always the danger that the CBI 'forecasts committee' was a prey to the optimism generated by opinions like *The Times's*, whose economic leader-writer Tim Congdon of stockbrokers L Messel told the CBI in January that he predicted an overall 4 per cent growth rate.



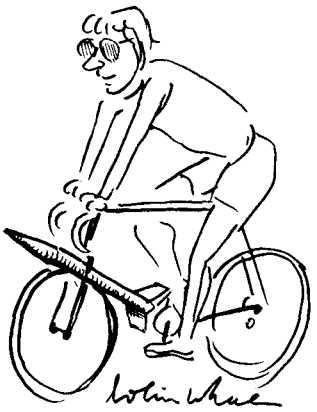
Beckett: 'anecdotal evidence'

Patrick Forbes

MISCELLANY

Back pedal

Duncan Campbell went to West Berlin for last week's END gathering accompanied by his bicycle. (It is, apparently, easier than you might think to take a bike on British Airways.) During a break in the END proceedings, Duncan decided to pay a visit to the other side of the wall. He cycled up to Checkpoint Charlie, only to be greeted by the grim voice of officialdom: 'Sorry, sir. You can have a visa for yourself. You could have a visa for your car, if you had a car. But you can't have a visa for a bicycle.' Unwilling to be parted from his trusty



machine (and apprehensive at the thought of trekking into East Berlin on foot), Duncan stayed in the West. One can understand the East Germans feeling a bit worried by the missiles which are being piled up in England's green and pleasant land; but what is it about a harmless old Holdsworth bicycle that makes them so edgy?

Old soldiers

Bad news for Michael Heseltine. At last November's Remembrance Day parade in Bolton a World War II RAF veteran called Bertie Lewis carried a CND banner while wearing his campaign medals. The banner was quickly taken from him by a police officer, but he went on to lay a CND wreath at the Bolton cenotaph. Lewis, aged 62, who is a member of the British Legion, was then banned by the Farnworth branch for a year for 'acting in a manner detrimental to the interests of the Royal British Legion'. He appealed to the Legion's area council, saying that he was merely obeying the words on the Bolton war memorial, which read: 'Our part must be to strive for peace, that their self-sacrifice be not in vain.' His suspension was slashed to two months, which meant he could return to the club. The humiliated Farnworth branch then appealed to their National Executive Council in London to have the ban reinstated. Last week the Legion's national officers ruled that he ban was void because Lewis had not been given adequate notice of the branch meeting which suspended him. Lewis, who is now an honorary member of CND, told the Executive that he wants the Legion to take a stand on peace and hold a debate about nuclear weapons. The NEC told him to put it to his branch, so he has decided to do just that. We await the outcome with breathless anticipation.

Nuts in May

We're following Paul Johnson's daily 'election analysis' in the *Daily Mail* with great interest. In a typically loopy piece on Monday, entitled 'The Sinister Truth Behind CND's Election Sham', Johnson assailed the peace movement for its impertinence in daring to challenge the government's nuclear defence policy. We trust that CND will be undaunted. After all, their cause is a just one: some years ago the *New Statesman* proved as much, in a long and irrefutable article entitled 'The Fallacy of the Deterrent'. The article castigated the notion that, 'to prevent a Third World War, we must arm ourselves to the teeth and negotiate from strength'. It argued, with much historical evidence, that 'the more we study the origins of wars, the clearer it becomes that the deterrent not merely fails to deter, but has exactly the opposite effect'. The author, as you've probably guessed, was Paul 'Red Peril' Johnson. And yes, we know it's a cheap trick to quote his old articles against him; but it's also irresistible.

Sex change

Denis Healey seems to be putting up a typically pugnacious performance for Labour in the campaign, but he must watch out. On Monday night he addressed a meeting in Brighouse Civic Hall on behalf of the Labour candidate for Calderdale. He said that Labour was going into the election equipped with 'men of experience, blooded in battle'. In his rousing *finale*, he told the throng that they should go forward 'in brotherhood and humanity'. The Calderdale candidate, Ann Holmes, is neither a man of experience nor a brother.

Question time

And now, only in your Super Soaraway *Statesman*, week two of the Miscellany election quiz:

1: Which party conference, and when, passed a resolution which 'accuses the present government of their failure to prepare for or to meet the economic crisis. By their improvident handling of our national resources and by their insistence on the pursuit of partisan ends they have destroyed the unity of our national life in these difficult times. This conference therefore considers that a complete change of method and approach is a first condition of national recovery'?

2: The Conservatives say that unemployment rose under the last Labour government, just as it has risen under the present one. But how much did the numbers *in work* change (a) between March 1974 and May 1979; (b) between May 1979 and the end of last year?

3: According to MORI's regular monthly polls, which party achieved the highest share of public support during the past four years, and when did it achieve it?

Answers on page 6.

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Unresigned in Brent

DESPITE his confident public utterances that he is Brent East's 'endorsed MP,' Reg Freeson is still a worried man. After last Thursday's General Management Committee meeting voted 47 to 20 to go ahead with reselection, the incumbent Labour MP made an emotional speech attacking what he called

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'whispering campaigns' and the 'caucus politics used by a small minority in the party for far too long.'

Before getting even half way through the weary 10 minute diatribe, cries of 'join the SDP,' 'we never chose *you*' and 'resign' were ringing through the packed Willesden school hall. Indeed, so hostile was the reception that Freeson was close to tears as he wound up his address in time to appear live before the TV cameras waiting outside. Nevertheless, he is so confident that attempts by the local party to select GLC leader Ken Livingstone as candidate will fail that he has already presented his nomination papers to the local returning officer.

But Freeson's confident assertions before the cameras that he has already been inundated with offers of help in the coming campaign are less than credible. Not only have most senior officers on the management committee, such as chairman Colin Adams, publicly refused to work for him in the coming weeks, but many local party activists said they would prefer to work for democratically elected candidates in marginal constituencies such as Highgate or Lambeth. Some groups, such as the Young Socialists and Socialist Organiser, have decided to carry on working for a Labour victory in Brent East if only to pre-empt any possible criticism by the NEC.

And, while there has been talk of running Livingstone as a GLC candidate – in the hope of capitalising mostly on the large local Irish vote – it is now almost certain that no one wants to jeopardise either a Labour victory or the GLC leader's future inside the Labour Party (or, indeed, as a future Brent East MP).

But even those who voted against continuing with reselection last week feel that he is yesterday's politician – the man who, as housing minister in the Wilson and Callaghan years, allegedly backed the IMF cuts, the Criminal Trespass Act and subsequently voted against Tony Benn in the Labour Party deputy leadership contest.

Paul Tarr

Additional information: Neil Hamilton

Secretive grants to industry

THE GOVERNMENT, despite its rhetoric about making the private sector 'stand on its own two feet', gives substantial grants to all sorts of companies, many of them already very profitable. The most secretive and arbitrary of these grants are those made under sections 7 and 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982.

These grants are discretionary, which means the Industry Secretary has given them to companies like Midland Bank, Tesco, and various prosperous defence companies because 'in his opinion' it would benefit the economy, or part of it, or because it is in the 'national interest'. (These grants are not the same as the automatic grants for companies in 'development areas'.)

Some of these grants are to encourage multinationals to produce goods in this country rather than elsewhere, such as the payment last year of £450,000 to Ford to produce tractors in the South East. Stanley Thomson, Ford's finance director, is a member of the Industrial Development Advisory Board (IDAB) which advises the Minister.

Why did Midland Bank pick up £1 million of public money to set up a computer complex in Barnsley? Why did cable makers BICC get two grants totalling £1 million in the first quarter of last year, and two more totalling £2.25 million in the last quarter? Reasoning is not made public because of the needs for commercial confidentiality.

The DoI won't disclose the identities of the 30 people on the Industrial Development Unit, who actually appraise applications for and negotiate the terms of discretionary grants. Half the unit are merchant bankers and accountants on secondment, and the other half are civil servants.

No one is accountable for these grants – the Department of Industry even refuses to answer MPs' questions in the House of Commons – but the need for accountability was demonstrated by the £3.4 million grant to Brown and Sharpe, to transfer its newly-bought factory from East London to Plymouth in 1981, with a national loss of 90 jobs. (*New Statesman* 4 December 1981.) Only last month, buried in a list of grants paid, did the DoI finally acknowledge what it had done with this substantial sum of money.

John Rentoul

Answers to Question time, p.5

1: Conservative Party Conference, 1947.

2: (a) increased by 200,000; (b) fell by 2.3 million.

3: Labour, with 50 per cent in October and November 1980.

Road to Thatcher's ruin

MARGARET THATCHER could lose an embarrassing number of votes in her Finchley constituency in the coming election because of her support for a local road scheme. In the 1982 local elections, Labour won back control of the eastern section of the constituency, partly be-

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cause of opposition to the road.

The road scheme in question is the Department of Transport's plan to widen London's North Circular Road into a full-blown urban motorway. A public inquiry into the scheme has been raging for the past two months. The road is intended to link with the equally contentious scheme to widen the Archway Road.

Although local feelings are running high, last week Mrs Thatcher came out in open support of the road. Her agent Andrew Thompson told local papers: 'She supports the ministry plan, but for her to make comments halfway through the inquiry is not a sensible political thing to do. She believes the road must be built.' The Labour Party candidate, Barnet councillor Laurence Spiegel, is one of the leading opponents of the road.

Although Thatcher's majority was 7,878 at the last election, she is far from secure, and a Labour win is not impossible. In the 1974 election her majority was 4,000.

The Tories have been worried enough to make efforts to ensure a united Tory front in support of the road. The *New Statesman* has a copy of the confidential minutes of a meeting of the Barnet Council Conservative Group, on 21 April 1983. The meeting was attended by Thatcher's agent who asked the group and the council for support for the road at the public inquiry. (The minutes also make a pained reference to the 'lack of confidentiality and . . . . lack of trust' within the Conservative group.) Barnet Council has now appeared at the inquiry in support of the road.

Mick Hamer

Tracking down animal lovers

ANOTHER animal rights activist claimed last week that his mail is being intercepted. Letters to him from nine organisations have been opened and resealed and finally deliveries dried up altogether – resuming only after he visited the Post Office to complain.

In February, local contacts of the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) claimed their letters were being intercepted and phone calls tapped (*New Statesman* 25 February 1983). Police and firms which rely on animal experiments have been baffled by the upsurge of protest over animal rights.

The new claims were made this week by St Albans BUAV member Bob Beluch. He first noticed his mail was being tampered with in January. Everything with a reference to animal organisations on the envelope had been affected, and then in February all mail from the organisations stopped, he says. He then arranged for various organisations to send him franked envelopes marked urgent. Four were sent, and none arrived. He checked with the RSPCA and Animal Aid to discover that communications sent to members in general had not been delivered to him.

Mr and Mrs Beluch demanded an explanation from an official at St Albans Post Office on 11 April. The official told him, says Mr Beluch, that the letters could be missing because the postman bore him a grudge or because he received so much animal literature. The next day, his mail began to arrive again.

Bob Beluch says that he has never been arrested and denies that he has taken part in any raid by the Animal Liberation Front, though he does have contact with members of it. His wife, Julie Beluch, became a celebrity in the animal welfare movement when she gave up work in the laboratories of Smith Kline and French at Welwyn Garden City, alleging that horrible cruelties were inflicted on animals in tests. The firm denied her allegations.

Kenneth Orchard, manager of mails operations at St Albans investigated Mr Beluch's claims, and denied his mail had been intercepted or that he was the victim of a postman's grudge.

Simon Berlyn

Disarming women

OVER THE LAST few months women from the peace movement have been speaking to trade union conferences about the Women's International Day for Disarmament, next Tuesday 24 May (see Listings).

Women in many towns in virtually every country of Western Europe, in the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia are all planning some sort of festive protest for the day.

According to one organiser, Carrie Pester, they have had an 'amazing response' from ordinary delegates at trade union conferences, and attracted the second largest fringe meetings (after Tony Benn) at the Scottish TUC.

Information about actions on the day are being co-ordinated by the organisers at the *New Statesman* office. Reports of what has happened, on the day only, should be sent by phone (01-251 5488/9) or telex (28449). ■

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ELECTION '83

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Shock! Horror! Our opponents won't fight back

IT IS CUSTOMARY for general elections to produce a certain sordid symmetry in the insults traded between the main contestants. 'They are no good/extreme/useless/incompetent/disastrous' says Party A of Party B, which in turn retorts that Party A is 'useless/extreme/incompetent/disastrous/no good'.

It was, in part, to put a stop to this unseemly behaviour that the Liberal/SDP Alliance says it set out to break the mould. From the performance of the different parties in the first few days of the present campaign, the pattern of symmetrical insults does indeed appear to have been broken – but not in the way the Liberal/SDP Alliance intended.

From the outset, the most notable feature of the Alliance's own campaign has been its 'no good/extreme etc' attack on Labour. To be sure the Alliance has directed various routine insults at the Tories, but more because Liberal and SDP reflexes have been conditioned by years in politics to behave this way than because they mean it. Their anti-Tory jibes are stale and predictable. It is their hatred of Labour that is venomous and heartfelt.

Almost whatever Labour policy you name, Roy Jenkins or David Owen or (in a slightly more muted way) David Steel will attack it in language that might have come straight from Conservative Central Office's dirty tricks department, or a leading article in the *Daily Mail*. On defence, the economy, the Common Market or Labour's internal affairs, Messrs Jenkins and Owen do not merely beg to differ: they speak like Victorian Methodist preachers who have just seen visions of Satan.

And how does Labour reply to this old-fashioned, pre-mould-breaking slagging off? With scarcely a word. While the Alliance sees Labour as an incorporated version of the devil, Labour leaders simply turn the other cheek. Labour attacks the Tories with grim abandon, and presents its own policies as credibly as it can. You would have to search hard in the manifesto, campaign documents and speeches being churned out from Labour's headquarters to discover any acknowledgment that this election is other than a standard two-party Labour-Tory battle.

At first sight, all this may seem to reflect merely myopia on the part of Labour, and the itching of old wounds on the part of the SDP defectors. But elections, whatever impressions are conveyed on television or in the papers, are not conducted as irrationally as they sometimes appear. Labour's apparent disdain for the Alliance, and the Alliance's assaults on Labour, both have perfectly rational roots.

LABOUR'S STRATEGIC task over the next three weeks is essentially two-fold. First, it must sweep as many undecided and uncertain electors as possible into the Labour camp. Second, it must weaken the Conservatives' grip on many of the people who rejected the party before the Falklands war, but have supported it since.

In an ideal electioneering world, those two tasks would largely overlap: electors would vote either for *them* or for *us*, and the trick would be to get as many of their supporters as possible to switch sides. The real electioneering world, however, is different. Opinion poll research from the past few general elections has produced two notable findings: first, that around one-quarter of all electors change their minds in some way during election campaigns; but second, very few of those people switch directly between Labour and Tory. Most move to or from the Liberals, or to or from the categories of 'don't know' and 'won't vote'.

Therefore, if Labour is to gain ground, and the Tories are to lose ground, during the next three weeks, it is not one batch of electors that Labour must consider, but two. It must persuade doubtful non-Tories to vote Labour, and persuade weak Tories to vote Alliance or to abstain.

Now, no Labour politician can conceivably express that second sentiment in public. However, much the same result could be achieved by generating a general anti-government mood, in which the Conservatives' record is discredited, while letting the Alliance use its own air-time to attract over discontented Tories.

Meanwhile, Labour can spend the rest of its effort persuading uncertain, floating voters that a Labour government would work. There is little point in directing fire at the Alliance, because the principal consequence of an effective barrage could well be to reinforce the intention of wobbly Tories to vote for Mrs Thatcher.

For the Alliance, the calculus of where to direct its venom is more complex. Assuming, as David Owen does, that the most the Alliance can reasonably hope for is a few dozen seats, there are four possible outcomes of the election: a) a clear Labour majority; b) a Parliament in which no party has a working majority; c) a modest Tory victory; d) a Tory landslide.

Outcomes a) and c) would be worst for the Alliance. It would have no effective voice in the next Parliament, and the Labour Party would live on, in ecstasy (outcome a) or hope (outcome c). The mould of British politics would have survived its assault.

Outcome b) – a hung Parliament – appears in the short run to offer the Alliance its best hope of advancement. But, as I argued in this space two weeks ago, the practical leverage available when you hold the balance of power is significantly less than the theoretical leverage. Alliance leaders say they would seek important modifications to Tory or Labour policy; more likely is a minority government, followed by another general election a few months later.

A hung Parliament would present the Alliance with a further problem. It implies a relatively good performance by the Labour Party – a performance that Labour might further improve on in another general election next year. If the Alliance were to gain more than it lost from a hung Parliament, it would have to win a really solid block of seats – say 50 or 60 – which would provide it with some hope of avoiding being squeezed in a second election.

That leaves outcome d) – a Tory landslide. To be sure the Alliance's hopes of securing electoral reform would be deferred; but a different, and equally durable, prize may then be for the taking. Labour would be subject to great, possibly intolerable, strains. The great Liberal dream of the '60s and early '70s might then become a possibility – a realignment in the centre and on the left of British politics. Like the Trotskyist groups on the fringes of the Labour Party, the Alliance would be willing to endure another decade of Tory rule, in order to win the vultures' fight over the carcass of the Labour Party.

There is an additional, more immediate reason why SDP leaders, in particular, need to abuse Labour. Most of them need to win over traditional Labour supporters in their own constituencies if they are to hold their seats. And a fair number must hold their seats if the SDP is not to become an embarrassing appendage to the Liberal Party – a grouping roughly on a par with the Young Liberals in its meagre influence but capacity to cause trouble.

For the time being the Tories remain gratefully aloof from these problems. But suppose the Alliance starts to pick up support at the Tories' expense. The Alliance would still need to attack Labour. Labour would still need to attack the Tories. But the Tories would need to start attacking the Alliance. The election campaign could become a bewildering chase round an unfamiliar triangle. Come back two-party Britain, all is forgiven! □

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Caligula syndrome

In the first of our special pre-election analyses, Professor Wilfred Beckerman concludes that the economic policy of the last four years has achieved nothing

ALBERT CAMUS'S play *Caligula* begins when the notorious Emperor has just had a sudden revelation about the way the world works. His insight is terribly simple; since moral laws are not of the kind that can be proved scientifically, or deduced logically from some generally acceptable axioms as in theorems in mathematics, any behaviour is as moral as any other behaviour. Morally, the world is absurd. Enthralled by the realisation that he is probably the first person in history who has had this great revelation and has the power and determination to put it into practice, he proceeds to inaugurate a reign of cruel and arbitrary terror.

Now how far all this is historically accurate does not affect the moral of the story that Camus wanted to get across. The key scene in the play (Act III, Scene 6) is where one of the characters, Cherea, tells Caligula that though his reasoning seems watertight the fact remains that some actions *are* better than others. For people want to live and to be happy, and this is impossible in a world ruled in accordance with Caligula's great insights. Logic is being pushed too far when the consequence is widespread suffering. So Caligula must be removed.

In some respects this is why Mrs Thatcher has to be removed. She, too, has had a simple, blinding, revelation about the way the *economic* world operates. Inflation is an intolerable evil and all that is required to cure it is monetary restraint. This may be painful at the beginning, but the monetarists have proved that (a) the increase in unemployment will be short-lived and (b) a lot of it is really voluntary. Anyway, if the price of reducing inflation has to be mass unemployment, then mass unemployment it shall be.

This may be very hard on the millions of people who will suffer as a result, but surely it is not *her* fault? If the unions are so obdurate and short-sighted that they insist on unwarranted pay increases, and if the only way to introduce a greater sense of 'realism' in the labour market, and hence to stop inflation, is to break their power by mass unemployment, why blame her? Faced with what appears to be a choice between accelerating inflation and temporary mass unemployment she had to choose the latter.

Of course, the analogy with Camus's Caligula is far from perfect. It may well be that an excessive price is being paid for Mrs Thatcher's faith in some simple, cut-and-dried, vision of the way the world works, but in other respects the analogy breaks down. To start with, it is unfair to Caligula; after all, he carried out an expansionist spending policy. On the other hand, I cannot be sure that Mrs Thatcher lacks compassion. After all, she may *really* believe the monetarist claim; lots of very clever economists do. Finally, her preference for mass unemployment rather than continuing inflation is, in fact, quite popular with a large section of the public and, as we shall soon find out, possibly even with a majority.

This is not as surprising as many people think. There may well be 13 per cent of the labour force – all those who are or would be eligible for unemployment benefit – out of work. But, in addition to pensioners and others who are not in the labour force, this still means that 87 per cent of the labour force are at work and for many of these the real value of their earnings has risen during the last year or two as a result of the slowing down of inflation. Also, the main damage done by inflation is probably the fear that it engenders in people's minds as to how far their own incomes will keep pace with rising prices. It is natural that many people will be prepared to pay the premium of higher unemployment to reduce the risk that *their* wages or salaries will fall behind; at least, if the premium is being paid by somebody else, namely those who have lost their jobs. These are mainly young people, the unskilled, ethnic minorities, people near retiring age, and so on. Now that unemployment does not look like rising much further, so that their own jobs seem relatively safe, the 87 per cent of the labour force who are still employed probably feel much more secure as a result of the fall in inflation, as will those living on retirement pensions and the like. There is really nothing surprising about the failure of mass unemployment to stir up the widespread outcry that had earlier been predicted.

THIS LEAVES two major questions to be asked. First, how far, in fact, was mass unemployment in Britain the means by which inflation was curtailed? Has the mass unemployment really instilled a new air of realism into labour market negotiations, or has it just stored up trouble for the future, if and when we get back to near full employment? Nobody can be sure of the answer to this question but some people argue plausibly that the world-wide slump should also get much of the 'credit' for reducing inflation. It has done this by reducing primary product prices and hence, indirectly, reducing the cost of living entering into wage bargains. In other words, the mass unemployment in the industrialised countries taken as a whole indirectly acted as a brake on inflation by adding to the impoverishment of many countries in the Third World.

If this is what has happened, any general economic revival in the industrialised countries would just push up import prices again as well as rekindle the fighting spirit of individual trade unions attempting – rationally, given the absurd environment in which they operate – to avoid being left behind. In that case, all the suffering, despair and misery inflicted on the unemployed and their families would not only have been an excessive price but would have bought nothing.

Furthermore, insofar as there has been no genuine reform of the labour market institutions, the class conflicts that have bedevilled the longer-term performance of the British economy will only have been exacerbated by the recession. During the 1950s and 1960s it became common to complain that British trade unionists had, like the Bourbons, learnt nothing and forgotten nothing; they did not forget the unemployment of pre-war years, and had not learnt that those bad old days were over, thanks to enlightened Keynesian economic policies. Hence, it was argued, it was stupid of them to continue to obstruct technical progress and labour saving innovation. Unfortunately those marvellous two decades when most governments pursued more-or-less Keynesian economic policies, and the western world had unprecedented growth and full employment, have now gone. Instead we are now ruled by a government that subscribes to the dogmas of monetarism and to Karl Marx's belief in the impotence of governments to have any real impact on the dynamics of capitalist society. The results of these simple faiths are now too well-known.

The prospects of sustained long-run growth in Britain are consequently worse than ever. The trade unions' Luddite tendencies will have been reinforced. And, at the same time, to restore investment to earlier levels it will no longer be enough to restore profit margins; a greater risk premium must now be added since firms can no longer count on government intervention to maintain full employment.

Assuming that mass unemployment in Britain must get *some* of the 'credit' for curbing inflation, the second question is whether this is the only way it can be done. Are we, in fact, condemned now to a perpetual choice between inflation and mass unemployment? If this is the choice facing modern capitalist society then it is like being given a choice between two alternative ways of committing suicide, though neither of the main political parties would concede this. The Tories will say that stable prices will automatically increase employment. Mr Foot and the trade union leaders pretend

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that full employment is all that matters and the inflation problem is carefully avoided. But insofar as there is a choice, the Tories will, of course, choose mass unemployment. The argument over inflation, the money supply, 'real' jobs, restoring incentives, and all that, may well be conducted in terms of economic concepts and analysis as if it were a purely technical debate, but, in the end, the choice is fundamentally political, and it is about income distribution and power.

INFLATION tends to hit income from capital more than other incomes, whilst unemployment hits mostly the working classes, who have little financial capital to lose. Furthermore, unemployment increases the relative power of the employers, whereas full employment increases the relative power of the workers. Given that the choice that a Tory government would obviously make may well be supported by a majority of the population for the reason given above, we may well be condemned to very long periods of high unemployment and hence slow growth.

Clearly every effort must be made to escape from the suicide options. Most non-monetarists would agree that this requires some significant change in wage negotiation machineries and labour market institutions. It may well be true that previous incomes policies have not been a great success, but that does not mean that *no* form of incomes policy will be any better, or that the scope for a successful incomes policy cannot be increased by following complementary, rather than conflicting, policies in the fiscal and monetary sphere.

I have no expertise in this matter but my hunch is that no major reform of labour market institutions will come from outside the Labour Party, or indeed, outside the trade union movement. Changes in labour market institutions only seem to be feasible if they evolve from within the institutions, and they cannot be imposed from outside. Thus, Keynes may well have saved capitalism by having shown how to achieve full employment in the immediate post-war years when the inflation problem was not yet a threat. But now that inflation has become a threat it may well be that only the trade unions can now save capitalism by showing how to reconcile full employment with price stability.

If this is the case it is tragic that no trade union leaders are saying anything to convince one that they recognise their responsibilities. One of the few things that Marx got right was that if trade unions were to succeed in continually raising the standard of living of the working classes they would postpone the demise of capitalism. (It is not surprising, therefore, that communists constantly urge trade unions to behave in a manner designed to smash the whole system.)

Nor are the Labour leaders much more eager to tackle the problem of inflation. The proposals to put into action 'Labour's new partnership with the trade unions' and to hold discussions with the trade unions over a 'national economic assessment' should – and no doubt will – be treated with derision. Similarly, heart-rending speeches about the undoubted evil of unemployment are all very well, but if the Labour movement cannot come up with some convincing evidence that it can also deal with the little matter of reconciling full employment with price stability, it will not be surprising if, on 9 June, the electors do not believe that Labour can avoid a return to the inflationary experience of the recent past.

Of course, it is not capitalism that has to be saved. It is the living standards of the ordinary men and women that are at stake, together with the preservation of their democratic liberties. A Conservative Party of the modern Thatcherite variety has no incentive to fight the battle to reconcile full employment with price stability. A middle-of-the-road SDP or Liberal Party, cut off from the labour movement, could probably never win such a battle (although they do at least seem determined to try, and strong electoral support for the Alliance may be the only way of forcing the two main parties to abandon their present policy stances). But, in principle, only the labour movement itself stands much chance of winning the battle against unemployment at an acceptable price in terms of inflation. If it could show the will to do so there would be further confirmation of the Caligula syndrome diagnosis: Caligula's reign only lasted four years. □

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ELECTION '83

Hate Mail

Mary Holland reviews the press coverage at the start of the election campaign

> If ever there was a 'yesterday's man', it is Mr Foot. All his imagery, his political evocations, even his economic arguments are drawn defiantly from a world not so much forgotten as not even capable of being remembered by the bulk of the British electorate. (*Observer*, 15 May, 1983).
>
> Labour's astonishing election manifesto is the biggest and most comprehensive assault on our liberties ever proposed by a major British political party. It is a Magna Carta for the snoop, the inspector, the informant and the form maniac. (*Daily Mail*, 17 May, 1983).

WHAT DO THESE two pieces of journalism have in common? You're right. They are both written by former editors of the *New Statesman*. All Labour needs now is for John Freeman to appear in a party political broadcast for the Conservatives.

To be fair, Anthony Howard's article in last Sunday's *Observer* was written in the guise of deep concern for the Labour Party's prospects under Michael Foot. Paul Johnson, on the other hand, is now in residence at the *Daily Mail* as the party's scourge and appears to have access to as much space as he wants to vent his spleen on former friends and colleagues.

Sir David English knows very well what Paul Johnson learnt as a cradle catholic – one convert attacking as heresy a faith that he formerly held dear is worth ten believers saying the same thing. Thus Johnson's considerable polemical gifts have, in the space of less than a week, been directed against the Labour manifesto, 'Mad Mike' Foot and Monsignor Bruce Kent of CND.

Of the populars, the *Daily Mail* together with the *Mail on Sunday* have taken the most consistent pro-Tory line of the campaign. While other papers, whatever their political leanings, try to keep up some pretence of presenting all sides, the *Mail* has little truck with such notions of evenhanded reporting. The editorial line starts on the front page with headlines that are often simple smears. Thus in the *Mail on Sunday* 'Now The Bully Boys Go Out'. This 'exclusive' by the paper's Industrial Editor, Christopher Leake, told of alleged threats by CND activists against employees of Tarmac Ltd, the construction company building concrete silos for cruise missiles at Greenham, unsubstantiated by a single quote from a named employee who claimed to have been threatened.

Monday's *Mail* brought the now notorious '35,000 Jobs Lost If Foot wins.' In case you missed it, this yarn alleged that the

Japanese Nissan Company would scrap plans to build a £500 million car plant in Britain if Labour was elected. Reporters Michael Kemp and Kevin Dowling quoted an anonymous 'leading official of Nissan in Europe' to back their story.

Nissan immediately denied the tale as 'utterly groundless'. Nothing daunted, the *Mail* followed the next day with another headline, this time proclaiming 'Car Job Row Boils Over'. In this, while virtually admitting that it could not persuade Nissan to substantiate its original story, the *Mail* wheeled on two British car chiefs, together with the Industry Secretary, Patrick Jenkin, to warn of 'catastrophic consequences' if Labour pulled out of the EEC.

Few of the other papers share the *Daily Mail's* eagerness for the fray. It may be that all creative enthusiasm has been expended on the opinion polls on which, according to Charles Wintour, Fleet Street will be spending a quarter of a million pounds before polling day, but a certain boredom is already evident. Mrs Thatcher's private life (*Daily Mirror*) is no competition on the feature pages for Joan Collins (*Daily Star, Sunday Mirror, Sunday People*), even if it does rather bitchily reveal that the Prime Minister's hair has been every bit as white as Michael Foot's since 1976 and is regularly dyed that tasteful shade of bronze. Is that sufficient reason for voting against her – or indeed for her?

The *Daily Express* has come out 'foursquare' behind Mrs Thatcher and the *Daily Mirror* a good deal less than foursquare behind the Labour Party. The *Mirror's* distinctly half-hearted endorsement, in which it backed Labour and then proceeded to attack the party's policies on disarmament, incomes policy and Europe, made depressing reading, not least for Labour candidates who count on having at least one spread of *Mirror* rhetoric to stick up in front windows to rally the troops. So too did Woodrow Wyatt's attack on the party in the *Sunday Mirror*, though he was at least offset by Roy Hattersley as a guest columnist, a role he now seems to be filling *con brio* for half of Fleet Street.

The other papers have not as yet felt the need to declare themselves foursquare behind anyone, perhaps because their readers already know where they stand. Thus *The Times's* editorial on the Labour Party's manifesto – 'Xenophobic, illiberal, syndicalist and confiscatory. There is no new hope for Britain in this document. There is no hope' – cannot have come as a surprise. On both sides there is fear of a surge towards the Alliance and determined efforts made to rubbish its chances in the *Daily Star, Sunday Mirror* and *Sunday Express*.

But if it has few friends among the 'populars', the Alliance has been treated with considerable warmth by the 'qualities'. The *Sunday Times* in an editorial entitled 'Enter the third force' not only reproached the other papers for failing to take the Alliance sufficiently seriously but pronounced this judgment – 'No deforming extremism disqualifies it. Its leaders are rational people with a long record of ministerial experience.' The *Financial Times* also welcomed the Alliance manifesto when it first appeared and later contrasted it favourably with Labour's 'loser manifesto'.

The *FT* is one of several traditionally Conservative newspapers which seems to be surprisingly critical of the Prime Minister and worried about her pre-eminence in the campaign. Even the loyalist *Daily Telegraph* was moved to remind its readers on Monday: 'If Mrs Thatcher had pneumonia the Conservatives would still be able to fight a proper campaign. Indeed if she were not there at all they would not lose their claim on the support of the people'.

Can it be that as the gap narrows ('7% shock as Tory lead is cut in half' – *Daily Mirror*) Mrs Thatcher may not seem to be quite the 22 carat asset her admirers thought when they greeted the election with the slogan 'the issue is Thatcher'? The problem with leaders who evoke passionate admiration is that they also evoke the kind of dislike which makes a lot of people go out and vote against them. If, as now seems possible, the election turns out to be a closer run thing than those early opinion polls predicted, the Tory press may well be advised to play down the Thatcher Factor. □

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ELECTION '83

Railway closures

Mick Hamer reveals Tory post-election plans

THERE WILL BE MASSIVE cuts in the railways if the Tories win the general election, despite last week's claim by the outgoing transport secretary, David Howell, that the government was not planning any 'major route closures'. In practice the Tories remain wedded to the cuts proposed in the Serpell Report. Howell's denial, apart from being election fodder for Conservative candidates, merely means that the rail cuts policy will not be spelt out in the Tory election manifesto.

A major reason for the cuts is the consistent refusal of this government to invest in the railways. This has built up a backlog of maintenance which, without a dramatic reversal in the government's investment policy, will force the closure of some lines. In 1979, when the Tories came to power, railway investment was £206 million a year (around £300 million at today's prices). Last year (1982) it was just £168 million. Yet a major independent report on the railways, due to be published next month, says that a £3,700 million investment package for the railways, including electrification of half the network, could save the country £250 million a year in running costs.

Sir David Serpell's report on the railways provoked political controversy from the moment that it was first leaked (in the *New Statesman* and other papers) earlier this year. The issue of rail cuts is doubly sensitive for the Tories. In its most draconian cut (known as 'Option A') Serpell proposed cutting the length of the railway network from its present 10,700 miles to just 1,600 miles. Such a cutback would rob roughly 300 constituencies of their railway. And because the cuts would affect rural areas more than towns, about two out of three of the affected MPs would be Tories.

There is also the effect on the commuter belt marginals. In its analysis of the 1979 election results, the Tory Party Central Office concluded that one of the most important factors in Thatcher's victory had been the pro-Tory swing in commuter belt marginals, such as Gravesend and Stevenage. The Tory analysts ascribed this swing to Labour's policy (developed by Tony Crosland) of increasing commuter fares.

After the election, the Tories will have no scruples about cutting the railways; or, for that matter, increasing commuter fares. When he gave a live interview on BBC's *Panorama* programme, days after the Serpell Report was officially published, Howell repeatedly declined to rule out cuts: 'We are talking about a whole range of options (which) the Serpell Report has opened up in a valuable way.' He also denied that the government had any intention of shelving the report. This contrasts with his speech last week, where he referred to the Serpell options as being 'broad illustrations . . . . emphatically not closure proposals'.

When BR chairman Sir Peter Parker pressed for a review of the railways, he believed it would show the need for investment. But Howell set up the review in a way which ensured that it would effectively ignore the case for higher investment and, instead, would concentrate on closures.

THE MEMBERS OF THE review were also nicely chosen. Serpell himself had previously been a civil service secretary to the 1960 Stedeford Committee, whose bastard offspring was the Beeching Report. And Alfred Goldstein, appointed at the behest of the Cabinet Office, is a close friend and long-standing colleague of Mrs Thatcher's personal economic adviser, Professor Alan Walters.

The Serpell committee produced eight options – one which cut jobs; one which increased investment; six which looked at different sizes of railway network, from the vestigal railway suggested in 'Option A' to one with a smaller cut of just 100 miles.

The report itself fiddled the figures in the investment option, so that it appeared to be less favourable than the option involving rail cuts. Each of the options involving rail cuts was compared with the existing network, which Serpell said would lose £980 million by 1992. But the high investment option, which, on Serpell's figures, would lose £800 million, was compared with the option in which jobs were cut. The Serpell Report concluded: 'This represents an improvement in annual operating results . . . . of £19 million . . . . As evaluated, therefore, the High Investment Option would not show a satisfactory financial return.'

The high investment option also excluded one of BR's most promising investment schemes – railway electrification. Two other government reports in the last four years have concluded that electrification would save money. The public transport pressure group, Transport 2000, asked independent consultants to produce a more realistic investment package. The team of consultants, which included Terrestrial and Environment Studies and the head of Oxford University's transport studies unit, came up with a £3,700 million package over

How the options compare

	Serpell's 1992 forecast	Serpell Option A	Serpell High Investment	Transport 2000 High Investment
Route length (miles)	10,100	1,600	10,100	10,100
Investment 1982-1992 (£m)	2,500	500	4,000	3,700
Deficit	980	−34	800	730

Note: The forecasts in the Serpell Report were based on a railway network before cuts with a notional length of 10,100 – smaller than the existing network.

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ten years, slightly less than the £4,000 million in Serpell.

The preliminary results from this study, which will not be finally published until at least next month, show a loss of £730 million, an improvement of £250 million over the forecast result in Serpell. And, unlike Serpell, this Option does not involve the closure of any lines. Indeed, it even envisages a small number of new passenger stations, chiefly on lines that are now used only by freight trains, such as the line to Mansfield – the largest town in Britain which is not on the railway network.

Yet, on the *Panorama* programme, Howell ruled out what he referred to as 'extreme options' such as the option of investing in the railways. 'As I said in the House of Commons the extreme propositions, which at one end go to spending £4 billion, which would make the French expenditure look small . . . . are ruled out.'

Howell, of course, was wrong about the scale of investment. Both the Transport 2000 option of £3,700 million and the Serpell option of £4,000 million (spread over ten years) are low compared with the investment in French Railways – £900 million in 1982 alone – or that in the West German railways of £1,400 million in 1982.

If the Tories win the election, then, the new transport secretary will be under pressure to cut railway spending, not only from the Tories and the Treasury, but also from British Rail itself. The hawks in BR have long wanted to replace many rural lines with buses. A Tory victory will quickly be followed by a shopping list of closures winging its way from BR to the Department of Transport. Head of the list (and already being discussed at BR) will be the line from Settle to Carlisle. In the middle of this line is the Ribblehead viaduct, which BR says will soon become unsafe unless £4.5 million is spent on it. The Tory backlog of non-investment is beginning to catch up.

A new Tory transport secretary would be in a strong position to enforce cuts. Sir Peter Parker ceases to be chairman in September and headhunters Korn Ferry are already interviewing replacement candidates. BR's internal candidate is its chief executive, Bob Reid, but the odds are on an external appointment. When the Tories last appointed a new chairman to make railway cuts they brought in a hard man from ICI – Dr Beeching. □

THE RELIGION OF TRUTH

Truth is that which is. Our being aware more fully of this reality is a matter of the development of the relevant but normally dormant faculties. We can know much more about the inner and spiritual realms of nature than is generally realised. The religion of truth is a matter of direct experience rather than adherence to dogma and belief.

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ELECTION '83

Politics of Thatcherism

Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques on the radical Right

THE HISTORIC MISSION of Thatcherism has not been to win this or that election – astute as it has been at mastering the ebb and flow of the opinion polls. It is much more ambitious than that. Its project has been to reverse the whole postwar drift of British society, to roll back the historic gains of the labour movement and other progressive forces, and to force-march the society, vigorously, into the past. These aims give some indication of the *radicalism* of its project. It opened a struggle on all fronts, the like of which has not been seen – from left or right – since the War.

In ideological and political terms, Thatcherism has gone some way towards substituting a new, reactionary kind of 'common sense'. It has made a series of damaging raids on the social democratic consensus. The main reference points of the postwar political settlement – already weakened and eroded in fact under successive Labour governments – have been contested *in principle*. One after another the old landmarks – full employment, welfare state support, equality of opportunity, the 'caring' society, neo-Keynesian economic management, corporatist incomes policies – have been reversed. In their place a new public philosophy has been constructed, rooted in the open affirmation of 'free market values' – the market as the measure of everything – and reactionary 'Victorian' social values – patriarchalism, racism and imperialist nostalgia. The whole shift towards a more authoritarian type of regime has been grounded in the search for 'Order' and the cry for 'Law' which arises among many ordinary people in times of crises and upheaval – and which has been dovetailed into the imposition of authority from above. There seems little doubt that, in the absence of a credible alternative, this reactionary common sense has made significant headway.

In the management of capitalism, the outstanding achievement of Thatcherism has been to disorganise the opposition. It has weakened and undermined the defensive organisations of the labour movement, exploited the unpopularity of the trade unions, threatened its strongest centres of resistance (for example in the shop stewards movements), used the 'dull compulsion' of unemployment to compel workers to accept the 'realism' of low wage settlements and the dole queue. It has apparently withdrawn the state from frontal engagement with different sectors of, especially, public sector workers, whilst supporting the struggle by management to regain control and restore profitability from a position just beyond the line of fire. It has, in these and other ways, altered the whole post-war balance of social forces.

FOR MUCH OF THE postwar period the Left assumed that, whoever was in power, modern capitalism inevitably required a 'corporatist' style of management. Advanced capitalism, it was assumed, could not survive without a large public sector, a welfare state, sensible bargaining arrangements between capital and labour, full employment, etc. And this, it was assumed, tended to make Labour-style governments the 'natural' managers of capitalism – give or take the odd swing of the electoral pendulum – and some sort of state management of economic policy inevitable. Mrs Thatcher, no doubt with US rather than European capitalism in mind, set her face resolutely against the whole inevitable corporatist drift – and has attempted to stabilise the management of a modern capitalism on the basis of a new relationship between capital, labour and the state.

It may be that Thatcherism is not finally to be judged in electoral terms – important as these moments of mobilisation are in the political process. Rather, it should be judged in terms of its success or failure in disorganising the labour movement and progressive forces, in shifting the terms of political debate, in reorganising the political terrain and in changing the balance of political forces in favour of capital and the Right. Thatcherism has successfully shifted the terrain, but without solving the problems. It has provoked a rupture – but failed to resolve it. As a result, regeneration will continue to be a long, contested and painful process. There is, indeed, no guarantee that this will have exhausted the repertoire of the radical Right. At some point something worse, something more authoritarian could follow.

The gaps, limits and internal contradictions of Thatcherism as a political formation are constantly exposed by its very commitment to full-frontal confrontation. The question is whether a credible, alternative political force can be constructed equal to the historic tasks which now confront the country, one capable of matching Thatcherism on the many fronts on which it has engaged. In that context, Thatcherism is a problem, not just 'for' the Left, but *of* the Left. Its rise was predicated on Labourism's decline. It seized on precisely those points of popular consciousness which Labourism had abandoned. It exploited the internal contradictions which the social democratic strategy of successive Labour governments had generated. In the face of industrial struggles which fail to generalise themselves for society as a whole – which fail to be as much for the low-paid, the unskilled, the black or women workers as they are for the advanced sectors of skilled, white, male labour – it is possible to represent the trade

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unions as a sectional interest. In circumstances where the commitment to 'welfare' fails to redistribute wealth or to increase real changes in the balance of power, it is possible to make the return to possessive individualism and competitiveness look like 'common sense'. In conditions where benefits are administered by a gigantic state bureaucracy and the content and forms of decision-making remain deeply undemocratic, individualism and 'freedom' can be made to appear attractive.

BUT IT IS NOT only in short-term ways that Thatcherism capitalised on Labour's failures. It has been working on long-term trends affecting the labour movement. The changing composition of the working class – a process much accelerated by the crisis itself – with the decline of those sections on which the labour movement has historically rested and by which it has been moulded; the failure of the labour movement to 'change with the times' in terms of communication and culture – Thatcherism has coincided with and exploited these longer-term tendencies which themselves necessitate a major political, social, cultural and ideological renewal of the labour movement. The new social forces and movements, which have put a set of profound new questions on the political agenda, have not been adequately combined with an older style of class politics. Nor, for the most part, have they been allowed to have a sufficiently transformatory impact on the traditional organisations and programmes of the Left. This is the kind of mistake which Thatcherism, with its attention to the centrality of women's domestic role, the policing of black communities and the frontal engagement with the peace movement, has not committed. In destroying the old political mould, Thatcherism has unwittingly allowed many of these contradictory forces and pressures to play more freely into the political backyard of the Left and the labour movement, precipitating its own fracturing and internal crisis.

Paradoxically, these longer term problems make Thatcherism not only a grave threat for the Left, but also a considerable opportunity. The transformation of the Left could not take place so long as its traditional elements and relationships remained credible and in place. But now transformation is the only real and practical alternative for the Left. It will, of course, be prolonged and painful. The unity of skilled and unskilled, of employed and unemployed, of whites and blacks, of men and women, of the new public sectors with the traditional private sector struggles will not be 'given' by circumstances. And such alliances cannot occur without painful readjustments and without a profound reshaping of the traditional demands and programmes of the Left.

It is necessary to confront, soberly and without illusions, the nature of the reversals which Thatcherism has already imposed on the Left. But it is also necessary to understand its weakness. Its 'popularity' is as much due to the lack of an alternative as the product of its own achievements. After all, monetarism's most outstanding success is to get the figures for the unemployed up to the four million mark – and unemployment *is*, once again, regarded, as the principal issue facing the country. That cannot automatically produce a popular surge for Thatcherism – unless there is no other available rallying point. Thatcherism's strength reflects the labour movement's weaknesses. But the weaknesses of Thatcherism can also be the labour movement's strengths. And it is highly vulnerable to attack – as the campaign against cruise missiles, for one, has clearly demonstrated.

In addition, though Thatcherism has proved to be an effective, populist force, it continues to be a minority one. The divisions of the Left enhance its appearance of popularity, unity and coherence. The task of the Left, in these circumstances, is not simply to pose the alternative – but to concert the anti-Thatcher forces. This does not consist simply of a defensive gathering of forces around the old strategies, but the construction of a new political force, the building of a new network of alliances. Specifically, this requires two things, which must be seen as interconnected. First, it means the kind of *transformation* of the labour movement we referred to above. Secondly, it requires the construction by the labour movement of the broadest possible set of alliances against Thatcherism, involving, in the initial instance, possibly quite modest objectives. □

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

☐ Princess Margaret has a recipe for the perfect picnic; take the butler along, use proper table and chairs, and choose the location carefully. – *The Times* (H. D. Lyon)

☐ If there is a nuclear attack farmers should drive their cows into a deep lane ditch and throw tarpaulins over them, according to agriculture minister Peter Walker. – *Daily Mirror* (Russell Holmes)

☐ Mr Terry Duffy, president of the engineering workers, said: 'The Labour Party is more united than at any time since 1945.' However, he immediately added that he still disagreed with the party's policy on defence and the Common Market. – *Observer* (Jill McQueen)

PROPERTY

Breaker's yard

Chris Hammett looks at rented flats

THE RISE AND FALL of William Stern has been told, with dramatic relish, in the business pages of the press. Stern was one of Britain's biggest landlords, whose property empire crashed in 1974 with debts of £143 million. In 1978, he became the world's biggest bankrupt, owing £118 million. He has recently, to considerable criticism, been discharged from bankruptcy – yet, beyond a fascination with the man's lifestyle and attitudes, the causes of the crash and the subsequent fate of Stern's numerous blocks of flats and their tenants have been largely ignored.

William Stern may have been the biggest victim of the 1974 property crash, but he was not the only one. His uniqueness lies in a different direction – one which most critics have overlooked. Stern was virtually the only large commercial landlord with a continuing commitment to residential landlordism. He was, also, almost alone in welcoming Labour's 1965 Rent Act, which he believed offered the basis for a continuing and profitable privately rented sector. His mistake was to expand his empire too quickly on borrowed money. When, in late 1973, in order to cool down the overheated property sector, the Bank of England raised the bank rate by 4 per cent at one go, Stern and many others were caught by rapidly escalating interest charges which vastly exceeded their rental income.

Even before his collapse, Stern was swimming against the tide. As anyone who has tried to rent a flat in London over the last few years knows, they are virtually unobtainable. In 1961, half of Greater London's households rented privately. In inner London, the figure was almost two thirds and, in the three central London boroughs of Camden, Kensington and Westminster, four out of five households rented. Today, less than half of the households in central London still rent privately and, in Greater and Inner London as a whole, the proportions have fallen by more than a half to 20 and 30 per cent respectively. In Inner London, two-thirds of the privately rented sector has disappeared over the last 20 years.

EVEN THESE FIGURES paint an over-optimistic picture. The fact that many privately rented properties are still left does not mean that they are available for reletting. Most are not. The majority of property is not relet on vacancy. It is either sold for owner occupation or kept empty pending sale. The majority of tenants in unfurnished accommodation are now elderly. When they

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move or die, they are not replaced. In central London, the only flats still being rented are of the 'luxury', short-stay company or holiday lets variety, with rents of £150 per week and upwards and minimal services provided to circumvent the Rent Acts.

Although renting in central London has never been particularly easy or particularly cheap, it was still possible, ten years ago, to obtain a flat in one of the ubiquitous mansion blocks dotted across central London. There were over 45,000 flats in something like 1,200 blocks and they accounted for just over half of all unfurnished dwellings in central London. The landlords were long established residential property or insurance companies such as the Norwich Union, the Prudential, the Legal and General and the Sun Alliance.

This option has now disappeared. Over the last 15 years, as the large landlords have divested themselves of their holdings in favour of the dubious security of commercial shop and office property, these blocks have been transformed by the so-called 'flat break-up' market into an increasingly expensive and exclusive owner-occupied sector. They are now owned by a new breed of specialist property 'asset stripper', some with names such as Specmoor and Gaingold, and many based in offshore tax havens such as Jersey or the exotic Dutch Antilles, where ownership details are virtually unobtainable.

The term landlord would be a misnomer for these new owners, for whom private renting is an unfortunate but necessary by-product of the search for short-term capital gains from the sale of previously tenanted property for owner occupation. Whilst the existence of tenants permits the blocks to be bought cheaply – at 30 to 40 per cent of their vacant possession sale price – it constitutes a major impediment to profits. Flat breakers buy blocks with a hope value: the hope that tenants will buy, move or die. Some blocks are literally advertised as having a large number of elderly tenants. Vacancies – and hence profits – can then be calculated with actuarial precision.

THE STORY OF SOUTH GROVE House in Highgate provides a classic example. Owned until early this year by the Sun Alliance Insurance Company, the block was sold off earlier this year, along with four other blocks totalling 200 flats, to Jersey resident David Kirsch, whose company Aylmer Square Investments paid £4 million for the flats – an average of £20,000 a flat. For the 50 flats in South Grove House, he paid £1.6 million – an average of £32,000 per flat. Similar flats to these sell on the owner-occupied market in Highgate for £65-£75,000 and, if all the flats were empty, the block would be worth around £3.5 million. The rents, however, were low (for a well maintained luxury block in Highgate) ranging from £600 to £1,300 per annum. The total gross rental income from the flats would be no more than £50,000 per annum. After deducting running expenses, maintenance, services, etc., it would be scarcely half that. Although £25,000 per annum is still a good return on the original cost of the block – which probably cost no more than £50,000 to build in the 1930s – it is a minute return on the current vacant possession of the block: less than one per cent.

Vacant possession is exactly what the Sun Alliance did not have and the £1.6 million sale price reflects this. Even for Kirsch, however, the gross rental income represents a return of only three per cent on his purchase price. Clearly, he did not buy the block as an income yielding investment. How, then, does Kirsch make a profit? The answer is simple.

Aylmer Square Investments have offered sitting tenants a 25 per cent discount on the vacant possession value of their flats. Even if the tenants buy for £48,000 this still represents a gross profit of £16,000, or 50 per cent on the average purchase price of £32,000 per flat. Those tenants who do not wish to buy are being offered £4,000 to move: a sum which pales into insignificance besides the £30,000 profit to be made on each vacant flat sold. As an incentive to buy or get out, Kirsch applied to raise the rents by over 100 per cent to £2-£3,000 per annum. For the half of the tenants who are over retirement age this is likely to prove a major headache.

AMONG THE EARLY breakers, Sir Nigel Broackes, now head of the Dockland Development Corporation and Victor (now Lord) Matthews of Express Newspapers fame together acquired, through Trafalgar House, the Clarendon Property Company's several hundred flats in Westminster and Kensington. They also put in a bid for the ill-fated London and County 'Key Flats' empire in late 1969, but this was eventually acquired by MEPC who subsequently, in early 1971, sold off almost their entire residential holding of some 7,500 flats at a 100 per cent profit. Some 1,500 flats, including Bickenhall Gardens, Baker Street, and Queens Club Gardens, Hammersmith, were sold to the Wallabrook Property Company of which Harold (now Lord) Lever was a director, for £10.5 million, and the rest, some 6,000, went to the First National Finance Corporation for £33.5 million.

Wallabrook have been breaking their share of the sale ever since. The flats which went to FNFC suffered a more protracted and complicated fate, as did the several blocks FNFC bought from the Co-operative Insurance Society in late 1971. In mid 1972, FNFC sold off its entire portfolio of 10,000 flats in three chunks to Stern Holdings, the notorious Berger Group and Regalion Securities (a part owned FNFC subsidiary), in a series of complicated deferred payment deals which would have netted them a 50 per cent profit.

The real scandal of the Stern affair is revealed by the subsequent history of the 65 blocks of flats in Stern's empire. When the liquidators, Cork Gully, were brought in in 1974, property values had slumped dramatically, finance had almost completely dried up and potential purchasers had disappeared. With the agreement of the creditors, Cork Cully put forward a 'scheme of arrangement' whereby they would administer the blocks in the hope of a more favourable market.

In the event, Cork Gully began to sell the blocks from 1976 onwards as the market began to pick up again. A minority of the blocks, such as Sheen Court in Richmond, were sold to tenant's associations, but usually only after a protracted struggle to purchase. In the great majority of cases, the tenants were not so lucky and the blocks were sold at knock-down prices to veteran breakers, who emerged like vultures to gorge on the juicy remnants of the Stern carcass. To take just one example, the prestigious Albert Court (opposite the Albert Hall in Kensington) was valued in 1974 at £3.5 million. Two years later, it was sold for just under £2 million to David Tannen's Tannergate. Today, individual flats in the block sell for anything from £150,000 to £450,000.

The fate of the 500-flat Russell Court in Russell Square is particularly noteworthy. In 1978, Camden Council entered into negotiations to buy this rather rundown block of one-room studio apartments for £1.65 million – some £150,000 over the District Valuers evaluation. After a series of acrimonious meetings, Camden finally decided to purchase the block on the casting vote of the then housing chairman John Mills. It was, however, too late. A mysterious new buyer, Alapam Ltd, stepped in with an offer of £1.6 million and bought the block over the head of the council, with the intention of selling the flats to sitting tenants and, where vacant, on the open market. If successful, they stand to make several million.

The most recent casualty has been Westgrove Securities, where luckless investors, lured by the temptation of 25 per cent profits and the presence of the National Westminster Bank as trustee, have watched helplessly as Westgrove has gone under. They, however, deserve less sympathy than the unfortunate tenants.

The government has done virtually nothing – despite a series of efforts by Sir Brandon Rhys Williams and other central London Tory MPs (including John Wheeler) to introduce a bill giving tenants the first right of refusal to purchase their blocks on an agreed basis. Tenants can do little but watch helplessly as their blocks are traded from one anonymous off-shore company to another. □

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DIARY

Christopher Price

My first stop in the election campaign was my local shoeshop; and since it was a desultory point of mid-afternoon quietude, the man had the time to indulge in some sales patter which eventually landed me with a pair of bionic Clarks Natureveldt, at £34.99. They came with a lot of diagrams and literature about Unique Underfoot Airflow Pattern, which sounded even more menacing in the German – *Ungedachter Komfort durch ein einzigartiges Luftkanalsystem*. But I took his word for it ('I do assure you, sir, you'll be walking on air for the next four weeks') and so I am. Certainly the shoes are comfortable, but so is the canvassing. There are a lot of 'don't knows', but they're real ones, willing to listen, rather than reticent, true-blue ladies who never like to pronounce the word 'Tory' – in front of me, at any rate. The old rule – 'Find the Labour votes, tick them off, don't waste time arguing' – simply doesn't apply any more. I find that more and more people actually want to talk on the doorstep. They're as sceptical of slick advertising in party politics as I was of Clarks Natureveldt. I hope my 'softly softly' doorstep approach is as effective on them as my Natureveldts are on my feet.

○

There are just a few of my Tory, true-blue ladies whom I suspect of secretly voting for me. My predecessor during the 1950s, a Conservative of humble South London origins called *Henry* Price, unaccountably resigned at the 1964 election. Folk say he was 'pushed' by the Whips. But certain little old ladies, when I knock them up (as we say in English politics), smile ecstatically and tell my how pleased they are that I am standing, because they knew my father *so* well. I reciprocate with an equally beatific smile and pass on to the next one.

○

By a freak chance (or, as some see it, a despicable Tory plot), there's a council by-election coinciding with the Real Campaign. So I trudge round after our candidate, a bright young solicitor, testing the differential reaction to local and national issues. So often, and quite justifiably, council tenants use general election campaigns to get their roofs mended. It often works. Eager candidates, desperate to be elected, deluge the local housing department with a flood of demands for *immediate* action – and 'certainly before 9 June at the latest'. But now, in Sydenham West – this bit of the constituency – I can relegate the roofs to my solicitor friend and talk about War and Peace. Last general election, most of the country had local and national issues sensibly in balance by holding the two elections on the same day. It would be nice if we could institutionalise the practice. But that would mean fixed Parliaments; and no potential Prime Minister would voluntarily forfeit the right – which Mrs Thatcher has so resolutely exerted – to pick the date of the general election for their own political advantage.

○

My Conservative opponent is a 40-year-old lawyer who proudly tells the press – presumably as an item in his favour – that he has represented Cambridge against Oxford at wine-tasting. I suppose it's a play for the floating Social Democrat vote. He seems to see himself as a moderate sort of fellow – even a potential wet. As I read these fascinating facts, I hear Roy Jenkins coming over moderate on the radio about the rise in unemployment. He didn't blame Mrs Thatcher for *all* of it. How much then? 'About half,' replied this supreme middleman poseur. I suspect that the electorate is simply not in the mood for this sort of 'moderation'. They've seen Thatcherism in the raw; and they'll only vote Labour if they see some red-blooded policies to combat it, and smell some determination to carry them out.

○

I am pleased the *Sunday Times* revealed to the nation at the weekend just exactly how Mrs Thatcher's autocue machine works. It used to be just newsreaders who had to become adept at this art – and until the more modern equipment came in, if you watched carefully, you could see even *their* eyes swinging minutely from Left to Right – as though they were watching Wimbledon on TV. Mrs Thatcher is the first British Prime Minister who has been packaged in this way for the television age. Her salesmen's constant efforts are not just to provide her with the right technology but also to soften the whole image – the hair, the pace of speaking and, above all, the voice. Considering how often, as the election approached, she was screaming like a fishwife in the House of Commons, they've been remarkably successful. Though people know that it's phoney and that no one could possibly *really* talk like that, all too many folk are mesmerised by it. Perhaps it's because, as Sue Arnold reminded us in the *Observer* recently, nannies are back in vogue.

○

I think that Michael is wise not to try to package an image, but just to be his old, passionate self. One problem is that, over the years, that 'self' has merged with a number of the rhetorical devices of the House of Commons – the most noticeable of which is the breaking up of sentences in the middle and, conversely, the refusal to leave gaps between them. It's necessary in the Commons to forestall interruptions and keep the initiative and the flow of the argument. But it's quite unnecessary in TV interviews and sometimes, even, gives the impression that Michael's trying to avoid the next question. Which is the last thing he really wants to do.

○

This week's most pleasant duty was to sit in the Vice-Presidents' box at Selhurst Park and watch Crystal Palace keep their Second Division place. The game was an excellent election augury. A boring first half; filthy weather and even filthier play by our opponents in the second; a solid triumph at the end. After the match the fans went wild and I felt that Alan Mullery might have come out and waved to them. I certainly did, just as I'm waving farewell to this diary for the duration while I set about replicating that Palace result in Lewisham West.

ROGER WODDIS

Making a meal of it

Archbishop Bruno Heim, the Pope's envoy in Britain, who suggested Mgr Bruce Kent, general secretary of CND, might be a 'useful idiot' serving Soviet interests, likes to entertain and relishes good food.

The Apostolic Pro-Nuncio
Remarked to his guests at dinner,
As he wiped the gravy from his chin,
'It's not enough to condemn the sin,
The thing is to hate the sinner.'

This seeming absence of charity
Is not in the least alarming:
As anyone knows, unless he's meek
And ready to turn the other cheek,
The Devil supports disarming.

The prelate went on, 'To smear Bruce Kent
And pray for his prompt removal
Is just good politics – pass the wine.'
A comment endorsed by Heseltine,
Who nodded his firm approval.

Making a meal of a roasted dove
Is par for this carrier pigeon,
Though many believers find it odd
That such a useful bigot of God
Concerns himself with religion.

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END's week in Berlin

Duncan Campbell looks back at END's unsatisfactory second international convention

Berlin

THE BERLIN CONVENTION on European Nuclear Disarmament ended last weekend amid widespread disappointment among Western European and American disarmament activists. The END convention – which is not, formally, the convention of the British-based END organisation – was the second and larger such international event. At a time when new international initiatives could not be more urgent, the conference structure unfortunately prevented both resolution taking and policy making. The timing is important. There are barely six months before the critical deployment in Europe of the first new American missiles – at Greenham Common, Comiso in Sicily and several bases in Germany.

The organisers had never intended that the convention would debate common policy on behalf of its many constituent activist parts. The effect of that decision was to turn much of the discussion between the 3,000 participants into a reiteration of the key issues. Under the surface, however, lay a number of difficult issues. These emerged only once as verbal 'violence.'

The most difficult argument was how to deal with the Eastern European peace groups and with which – the official, the unofficial, or both. The tension over how to handle East-West relations has been building up for some time. Most participants recalled the remarkable attack on the conference organisers circulated in January by Yuri Zhukov, the president of the official Soviet Peace Council (*NS* 14 January 1983). Zhukov had refused participation by his Council on the grounds that cold war 'confrontation' and an 'open ideological struggle' was the aim of some of the organisers. He claimed, in particular, that the West Berlin 'working group' of organisers intended that the 'German question' (reunification) should feature as one of the major topics of discussion.

The Zhukov letter has been followed by rejections from all other official peace organisations, as well as the refusal of visas to members of independent groups who had wanted to attend from Eastern Europe. Late in the conference, two letters arrived almost simultaneously. One was from the official Hungarian Peace Council; the other from the independent group, Dialogue. Neither was to attend. The official committee reiterated some of Zhukov's letter, as well as making other complaints. Dialogue feared that its existence in Hungary would be jeopardised if it upstaged the official council.

In retrospect, and despite many absurdities, some of Zhukov's allegations looked uncomfortably accurate. Partly as a result of his own action, the convention did serve to emphasise *bloc* divisions in Europe. And several German questions were indeed high on the agenda. The organisers repudiated Zhukov's claim that German reunification was to be a theme, but it emerged, nonetheless, in the presentation of an International Forum (one of six) on 'The two Germanies – a nuclear-free zone?'.

This session was advertised separately from the remainder of the convention. A poster, unique to the 'Two Germanies' discussion, was produced to advertise the event – adding only parenthetically that the discussion was part of the END convention. The poster depicted divided Germany as a single dinner plate, circumscribed in the national colours, and with a hairline crack of a division. Sausage-like Pershing and SS20 missiles, lying on the barely fractured plate, were the 'unpleasant meal' that the poster announced was to be discussed. It might have been a well intentioned move, but it only served to provoke further unhappiness among foreign END activists about the German question. Edward Thompson commented that the German groups should realise that Germany was 'not pivotal' in European disarmament.

THERE WERE TO BE further provocations. The most publicised event of the convention became the token demonstration in East Berlin by the Green Party leaders and MPs – Petra Kelly and retired General Gert Bastian with three other Greens. In a single stroke, the Greens provoked a rift with the peace wing of the SPD social democrats and others in the German peace movement, and embarrassed and dismayed many convention participants. As many END activists had feared beforehand, Berlin had indeed provided the ideal opportunity for ill-considered adventurism in the divided city, which served to emphasise the *bloc* divisions of Europe rather than any unity of forces in the peace movement.

Kelly, Bastian and the others had gone to Alexanderplatz in the centre of East Berlin at midday, held up banners and talked to some of the passers-by. After some minutes, they were taken to a police station. Detained for three hours, they arrived back in the west to hold a timely press conference just after 5 o'clock the same afternoon. Just before they arrived, the microphone was taken by a succession of SPD MPs and, later, by others, who condemned the Green's 'tour'. One prominent SPD MP, Karsten Voigt, was angry that he had earlier signed a petition to the East German government, protesting at what he had been told was the Greens' 'imprisonment'.

Rather than being imprisoned, it later appeared that, once they had been recognised, the Greens had received the apologies of a senior East German official. Apart from holding diplomatic passports issued by the Federal Republic to all MPs, Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian have been considerably celebrated on East German state media, as authors of the Krefelder Appeal against the new NATO missiles. Yet, with remarkable hyperbole, Petra Kelly claimed that the event had been one in which she and her colleagues had joined those risking their own 'safety and lives'.

The mischief of the event might, on another occasion, have served as a calculated tease of the East Germans, who are already embarrassed by the use of their official 'swords into ploughshares' slogan by the unofficial peace movement. On this occasion, it was widely regarded as thoughtless. The immediate damage included the apparent withdrawal of one East European speaker from a convention platform, and the fracturing of some informal and private East-West links. At the convention, those with active East European contacts were already warning of the increasing repression born of confrontation with NATO states and the new Cold War.

IN NO SENSE, therfore, was the conference as pan-European as its slogan – 'a nuclear-free Europe from Poland to Portugal' – suggested. East Europeans not in exile were not there. The penultimate event of the conference, a human chain from West Berlin's Polish mission to the Portugese consulate, seemed devoid of much meaning. Only about 1,500 had attended the final plenary session just before, leaving many empty spaces in the huge auditorium of the Berlin International Conference Centre.

The Centre itself, a vast modernistic silver palace, looked and felt at all times like a Steven Spielberg creation which would shortly and powerfully rise into orbit. It took some effort to humanise the surroundings, a feat nobly attempted by the Greenham Common camp contingent and others in the women's peace movement. The achievement of the convention was the manner in which a few groups – the women, some church representatives – created valuable international links and solidarity. On the political plane, a promising new link was made between the American Freeze movement and the left of the SPD. Although the SPD are still agonising over their final attitude to the new NATO missiles, there is a reasonable chance that the party may introduce a freeze resolution into the Bundestag.

The superficial high-tech organisation and efficiency of the convention, which cost about £50,000 for a clutch of auditoria all equipped with simultaneous translation facilities, contrasted sharply with remarkable disorganisation at higher levels. Advertised 'star' speakers such as former Swedish premier Olof Palme, were absent. Some had not even been invited before their names were advertised. Others were urgently asked to turn up for sessions to which they had not

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BRETECHER
playmate

don't get dressed yet. I want to take some photos of you it's so beautiful
wait a minute I'll put some vaseline on the lens
no, not sexy... softer, more gentle you're a mother
that's it... lovely, fine, terrific. now another pose
no, not that!
more introspective more mysterious more mother
good good good... now something else
oh please, this isn't for Penthouse, you're a MOTHER!
lovely, really lovely. one last one
oh for God's sake have you heard a word I've been saying?
listen Nono
OK you win for now but if you keep calling me mother all the time I'll kick your head in!
BRETECHER

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been invited at all. The American Freeze campaign leader, Ms Randy Forsberg, flew in after being asked to attend at less than 24 hours notice.

The convention had a byzantine organisational structure. The END organisation in London was not the organiser – as members of British END have sometimes been at pains to point out. That was in the hands of a loosely gathered 'International Liaison Committee', whose key members form an international secretariat. For Berlin, additional window-dressing was provided in the form of a German 'advisory committee' of prominent political figures, including SPD and Green Party activists and the exiled East German Rudolf Bahro. But the detailed conference organisation was almost entirely in the hands of the Berlin-based 'working group'. It was this group's trip to Moscow last year which lead to the Zhukov letter.

The British moving force of the END convention has been Ken Coates of the Bertrand Russell Foundation in Nottingham. Relations between the foundation and Mr Coates – and between END and CND in London – are, at best, fragile. Coates's critics have recently accused him of virtually rewriting history, redesignating as the 'Russell Appeal' the 1980 END Appeal. The critics suggest that some members of the international secretariat organising END are near to being self-appointed. More seriously, it is pointed out that the minimally structured way in which it has operated has led directly to the dissatisfaction widely felt in Berlin.

A third conference is planned for Perugia, Italy, in 1984. Unless new dialogue is opened with the Eastern groups, or the Western organisations of 'END' can put together a more coherent federation, that convention may only have setbacks to consider, and very little new to say. □

UNITED STATES

Two-term Ronnie

Claudia Wright asks whether President Reagan will run again

Washington

DURING A DINNER conversation a few days ago in Atlanta, former President Jimmy Carter said that, in his view, Israel wants one-term Presidents in the US because that increases Israel's political leverage. Carter told his listerners that the Begin government and its American supporters were not only responsible for pushing the 1980 challenge of Senator Edward Kennedy for the Democratic nomination, but indirectly responsible for his own defeat by Ronald Reagan.

It is curious that Carter should have made such bluntly anti-Israel remarks following a warning (published only a few days before, in the *Atlanta Constitution*) by Stuart Eizenstat, his principal domestic policy advisor and the man generally credited with rewriting his recent memoirs whenever hostility towards Prime Minister Menachem Begin manifested itself. On 6 May, Eizenstat had written that Carter's audience should stick 'to the assigned topic – increased US-Saudi Arabian business – and not degenerate into a political diatribe against Israel, American friendship toward Israel, or our anti-boycott laws.'

But on one point, at least, no one can dispute Carter's remarks. One-term Presidents are usually too insecure at home to hazard conflict with Israel. The only serious Presidential challenges to Israel have occurred in a President's second term. Dwight Eisenhower threatened Prime Minister David Ben Gurion with severe sanctions unless Israel evacuated the Sinai territory that it had taken in the 1956 war, and Ben Gurion conceded. That was in February 1957 – just three months after Eisenhower had won re-election.

The question that Mr Begin must now address is whether he would be better off with a re-elected Reagan Administration, or with a Democratic victory by former Vice President Walter Mondale, or Senator John Glenn. Last December in Washington, Mr Reagan told King Hussein of Jordan that he expected to win the 1984 election without Jewish votes. King Hussein's recollection of the remark is more durable than that of the White House, which has denied that it was ever made.

At this moment, notwithstanding a minor improvement in Mr Reagan's popularity, no one in the White House seriously imagines that the President could win the election without strong Jewish support, at least in New York, Illinois, Florida and California. The remark is the sort of loose talk that tends to pop out of the President's mouth without preliminary mental process. However, to make absolutely certain that the American Jewish community does not jump ship, the President's aides have, this month, been meeting with Jewish leaders to mobilise a national Jewish Republican coalition. For good measure, on 13 May, Mr Caspar Weinberger, the Secretary of Defense, was sent to New York to assure the American Jewish Committee that he has no 'animus against Israel'. In pledging his future support for Israel, Weinberger made several important concessions to Israel's defence industries – concessions which California's military contractors have opposed, for fear that they will lead to Israeli competition in traditional American arms markets.

As seasonal as the herrings now running in the Potomac River, these are the first clear signs that the President has begun his 1984 campaign. But, candidate though Mr Reagan may be, there are two theories about his ultimate intentions.

One is that the President is feeling his 74 years and lacks the will for another term. According to this view, Mr Reagan is ready to drop, but won't do so unless the domestic economy and the polls demonstrate that the Republican Party could retain the White House without him. In this interpretation, the President will announce his candidacy, mobilise his money-men, but still leave open the possibility, at convention time next year, of throwing it all to his successor.

The second theory is that, despite his age, growing deafness and failure of concentration, there is nothing that Mr Reagan, his wife, friends and advisors would prefer to a second term. Mr Reagan will therefore announce his candidacy, win the election and endure – God and the flesh willing – until he is almost 78.

Presidents are not required to be in their physical prime. Woodrow Wilson was paralysed by a thrombosis for the last two years of his second term – 1919-21 – when his wife ran the state. Some of the Wilson symptoms – involuntary gestures, loss of concentration, rambling speech, bursts of hostility alternating with sentimentalism – have been appearing in those of Mr Reagan's appearances that are unscripted, unrehearsed and untelevised. A meeting on 5 May, with six newspaper reporters, produced several embarrassing flights of fantasy as Mr Reagan tried to recall who the United States supported in Nicaragua, and why, and what his administration had achieved in the Middle East.

In answer to the latter question, Mr Reagan first suggested: 'We've made great progress – Beirut is no longer being shelled on a daily basis round the clock.' More grandiosely, he added: 'We are the ones who have gone a step beyond that with regard to trying to have an overall peace in the entire area. That had never been proposed.'

Ironically, such apparent symptoms of feebleness are likely to make Mr Reagan an exception to Carter's rule – more acceptable to Israel for a second term than either of the Democratic alternatives. Mondale and Glenn are trying their best to please Jerusalem, but there is the distinct possibility that, whichever man wins the Democratic nomination, he will choose a black man for Vice-President – and, if Mondale is the nominee, Andrew Young could be his running mate. Young is now Mayor of Atlanta, but, in the Carter Administration, was forced to resign as UN ambassador after MOSSAD had taped him talking with the PLO representative in New York.

At this point, it is unlikely that the Democrats could defeat Mr Reagan on domestic economic issues, nuclear disarmament, the war in Central America, or the Arab-Israeli conflict. Public opinion also appears impervious to the scandals in which Reagan Administration officials are involved.

A President with Mr Reagan's known weaknesses is consequently bound to appeal to Mr Begin's government far more than the Democratic candidates, with their untested loyalties. Since the Secretary of State has conceded Israel's version of the Israel-Lebanon agreement, and the Secretary of Defense has threatened 'the Soviets or any proxies that they may have in Syria that any aggression by them would be met by a retaliatory force', there is next to nothing that Israel says that it wants that the Reagan Administration has not, already, offered. □

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LETTERS

Quieter cries for help

Carol Rumens, London NW1

I was glad to see the *New Statesman* taking up the cause of some of the less well-known Czech protestors (*NS* 13 May). It is unfortunately very rare that those dissidents who are not 'names' get any attention whatever from the Western media. Obviously, every single case of persecution cannot be reported. And it is understandable that the press should show special interest where the dissident is already well known, as in the recent case of the playwright Vaclav Havel. However, it ought to be brought home more often to Western readers that protest is not the prerogative of an intellectual elite; that many thousands of ordinary men and women (Jiri Gruntorad, for instance, is a brick-layer by trade; Drahomira Fajtlova a hotel manageress) are also being made to suffer appallingly for their principles. It is to be hoped that both individuals and organisations such as the trade unions will be moved by a sense of identity with these hidden protestors to express their solidarity in public. (Is it too much to ask of the press that the forthcoming trial of Chartist Ladislav Lis should also be given coverage?) It cannot be repeated often enough that repressive governments, however iron-clad in their attitude to human rights where their own people are concerned, *are* sensitive to, and *can* be influenced by, public opinion in the West.

Scouts' dishonour

F. Henderson, Hucclecote, Gloucester

In the course of nearly twenty years as a *New Statesman* reader there have been a number of occasions when I have been stirred towards the typewriter to challenge the veracity or balance of some article or comment, but lethargy has stayed my hand. This weekend, however, I decided that I could not allow you to get away with your 'cartoon' (*NS* 6 May), depicting apparently a Scout leader and Scout, and the implications therein.

Whatever your view on the Scout Association may be (by the way, we don't wear short trousers these days, and have not done for fifteen years) the drawing is, in my opinion, offensive and in very poor taste. It also implies that you are prejudicing the results of an enquiry yet to be held.

I shall continue reading your publication, but I trust that your barbs will in general be aimed, as they usually have been, at persons and organisations more worthy of blame than those involved in Scouting and other worthwhile bodies.

A wider vision

Jean Stead, Edinburgh

I was delighted to read Dora Russell's typically robust criticism of Liz Heron's examination of the women's movement (Letters 15 April).

The women's peace movement is not now a single-issued focus, though it started as that. It is no accident that women have set up separate peace movements throughout Western Europe. They have been forced into this. Out of them, a more profound feminism has grown, which seeks separatism, not in human relationships, but in those organisations responsible for running society, at present almost totally dominated by men. It seems to the feminists that some men are very good at power struggles and war, but that this is not good enough. The arms race seems the logical conclusion in a world where half the population is effectively denied any say in how it should be run. And this applies to every country.

Feminists realise that it is up to women themselves to remedy this and to move in to take over responsibility, however painful this might be – and it had already proved extremely painful for a number of women imprisoned for their actions at Greenham Common and Faslane.

For the time being, they have to organise themselves separately in order to put an end to the system in which they take second place, and sometimes not even that, in every area of public life. This does not mean that they do not appreciate the support and goodwill they are receiving from many men secure enough in their masculinity not to feel fear of women. As Petra Kelly said: 'Women must learn to live with their rationality and men with their tears.' Then the world may have a chance to become whole before it is too late for all of us.

A far, far better thing . . .

Neville Taylor, Chief of Public Relations, Ministry of Defence

An article in the *New Statesman* (*NS* 6 May) referred to the resignation of Mr K. J. Rawson as Chief Naval Architect.

The Ministry of Defence wishes to make it absolutely clear that Mr Rawson is not resigning as Chief Naval Architect because of lack of support from Ministers (as claimed by the article). The MOD is reluctantly letting him go to an important academic post in which his unique knowledge of ship design technology will be of considerable benefit to the nation.

A miner's life

Geoffrey Kirk, Director of Public Relations, National Coal Board

No one – and certainly not the National Coal Board – would claim that mining is now an easy job or that it is as safe as it ought to be. Perhaps because of a commendable respect for coalminers, Anne Smith in her review of *A Miner's Life* by Douglas and Krieger (*NS* 13 May) began with the claim that conditions in many pits are little better than they were in the days of D. H. Lawrence's father and ended by stating that mining can never be any better than the most dangerous job men do.

The first statement is absurd and the second untrue. When Lawrence senior worked underground every ton of coal was won and filled by human muscle. The roof had to be supported by timber props and bars, each set by hand – also a physically demanding operation. Fatal accidents regularly exceeded a thousand a year.

Nowadays virtually all coal is cut and loaded by machines and at the face the roof is supported by hydraulic steel chocks that are advanced and set by the operation of a lever. There were 44 fatal accidents last year – 44 too many, but far removed from the carnage of 80 years ago. The improvement has come from joint and determined action by management and unions. There are fewer miners now than there were then but the accident rate, whether measured on the basis of every thousand men employed or every 100,000 manshifts worked, is now higher in three major British industries than it is in coalmining.

Women have been prohibited by law from working underground for more than a hundred years so it is not Anne Smith's fault that she lacks the personal experience that would qualify her to discuss working conditions underground. But surely that does not mean she should accept uncritically the claims made by Douglass and Krieger.

Blots on the landscape

Philip Lowe, Haywards Heath, Sussex

I was extremely surprised to read the article by Jim Perrin on the Countryside Commission (*NS* 6 May). In so far as it is accurate, it extensively plagiarises a study of mine on political appointments to environmental quangos to be published in this month's *Town and Country Planning*.

Unfortunately, it is also studded with damaging inaccuracies, including misleading details about personalities within the Commission. I wish to protest at being so shamefully plagiarised and to dissociate myself from the article's inaccuracies which are in no way derived from my work.

Michael H. Glen, Head of Communications Branch, Countryside Commission, Glos.

The article by Jim Perrin, 'No Longer a Watchdog' (*NS* 6 May), was naturally of interest to us. But it seems to be wide of the mark. While it is not for us to dispute your correspondent's opinion, we do take issue with the factual errors.

The 1981 Act gave us greater autonomy, but it did not give us, nor have we taken, the discretion to ignore our statutory obligations. There has certainly been a shift in emphasis in the Commission's objectives – as any organisation rearranges its priorities from time to time. We clearly stated these in our 'Prospectus' launched at the time our departmental status changed in April 1982 to that of grant in aid public body. Certainly some interests were concerned lest we saw recreation as less important than conservation. It remains, however, one of the three major aims of our promotional work – conserving the landscape, encouraging provision for recreation and ensuring public access for the countryside.

Appointments to the Commission are of course made by the government of the day. On a point of fact, however, Mrs John Hooson has never been a Commissioner. Commissioners are appointed in their personal capacity, but at present Youth Hostelling, horseriding, angling and walking are among the professional and/or personal interests of Commissioners.

You do our Chairman less than credit in omitting his vice-presidency of the RSPB, of which he was previously Chairman for five years. He is also a founder member and vice-chairman of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group. Incidentally, Mr Perrin's sources of information on the likely new Chairman of the NCC let him down sadly. As you will know, the appointment of Sir Ralph Verney's successor, Mr William Wilkinson, was announced several days before your paper was published.

As far as our specific activities are concerned, we would refute any suggestion that we are neglecting our statutory duties. And while we are continuing to put effort into urban fringe projects, our most recent success – being asked to extend the 'Groundwork' approach to five new districts in the north-west – is funded by an additional exchequer grant. There is no drain on our resources there.

In the consultations on the future of the uplands, far from omitting to hear from recreational and conservation interests, we specifically invited representatives from a wide range of the voluntary and private sectors concerned with these issues.

Finally a small point. Mr Perrin offered to check quotations with our Chairman after his interview. This normal courtesy was not observed.

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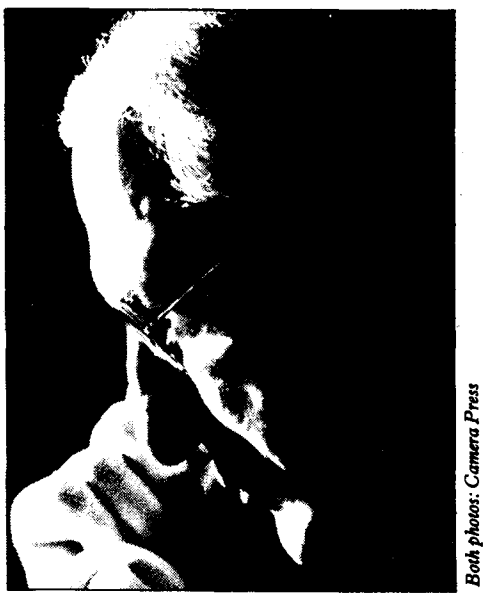
Churchill accused . . .

David McKittrick

Submarines in pubs

In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-45
ROBERT FISK *Deutsch* £25



. . . De Valera of 'frolicking'

Both photos: Camera Press

FOR MANY in Ireland, north and south, World War II was something of a sideshow, a transient phenomenon which distracted from ancient quarrels. To an extraordinary extent, attitudes to the war were determined by the quarrels between Irish and British, nationalist and unionist. The Irish question took precedence over the Hitler question. The Republic of Ireland, known then as Eire, remained neutral throughout the war, to the satisfaction of Nazi Germany and the anger of Britain and the United States. The Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, became a particular hate-figure among the Allies; Churchill accused him of 'frolicking' with the Germans and Japanese.

Irish neutrality meant the existence of a German legation in Dublin, and this gave rise to a widespread belief that Ireland was playing host to a nest of Nazi spies. It was also thought in Britain (particularly by Churchill himself) that U-boats were receiving unofficial succour from sympathisers on Ireland's west coast. In fact, as Fisk's meticulous research conclusively demonstrates, the occasional German spy who dropped in was swiftly locked up. The odd U-boat probably did turn up but, as somebody put it, most of the submarines were seen in pubs.

Britain's over-riding concern in the early years of the war was to gain the use of the so-called Treaty Ports of Cobh, Lough Swilly and Berehaven. These had been retained by Britain under the 1921 Treaty but, with a startling lack of prescience, had been handed over to the Irish in 1938. Churchill was desperate to secure the use of the ports, which would have given the Royal Navy an extra 200 miles' range in the Atlantic; but De Valera said no. This impasse, made worse by the personal enmity between the two prime ministers, soured Anglo-Irish relations during the war and for many years afterwards.

Churchill, the old imperialist, questioned Eire's right to independence, continuing to regard her as a colonial dependency. He several times thought about seizing the ports by force. Egged on by the Unionist government in Belfast, he introduced punitive trading sanctions against Eire. Even during his victory broadcast at the end of the war, he devoted a passage to attacking De Valera by name. He regarded Dev as misleading an Ireland which he believed was basically pro-British and indeed pro-Empire. But in fact public support for neutrality was overwhelming and crossed party lines. If Irish independence meant anything, it meant a freedom of choice about whether or not to go to war.

At the start of the war, Ireland saw it as a conflict between rival power blocs. Dev in particular remembered the First World War, in which tens of thousands of Irishmen had died – to no purpose, as he saw it. And besides, as another historian has put it, liberty and England did not appear to the Irish to be synonymous. Dev summed it up: 'Our circumstances, our history, the incompleteness of our national freedom through the partition of our country, made any other policy impracticable.'

In 1940 Churchill made a desperate, secret attempt to meet what appeared to be De Valera's conditions for entering the war. Having earlier declared that 'we cannot in any circumstances sell the loyalists of Northern Ireland', Churchill proceeded to offer to do exactly that. Spurred by German victories in France, he promised De Valera Irish unity in exchange for Eire's entry into the war. Dev turned him down flat, judging that Churchill either could not or would not deliver on such a promise. Fisk's exhaustive treatment of this episode fails to establish definitively whether Churchill was serious or not; but he is probably right in guessing that he never really intended to 'sell the loyalists'.

David McKittrick is London Editor of the Irish Times

For all De Valera's rigidity, a great deal of Anglo-Irish co-operation went on behind the scenes. The Irish and British armies and intelligence services collaborated extensively; British airmen were quietly escorted to Northern Ireland when technically they should have been interned; Ireland took thousands of British evacuees, and Britain gave De Valera guns and equipment to resist any German invasion attempt. England lent Dev its hangman, Albert Pierpoint, for the execution of IRA men. More Southerners than Northerners joined the British Army; Eire citizens won eight VCs.

In the end, however, De Valera went too far in his insistence that neutrality entailed a rigidly balanced public posture. When Roosevelt died he sent his sympathies to the Americans; when Hitler died, therefore, he called personally at the German Legation to express his condolences. The fact that his visit coincided with the first detailed revelations about the concentration camps earned Dev the odium of the civilised world.

Northern Ireland, meanwhile, had had a bad war. Fisk shows that Craigavon consistently put Northern Ireland's interests before those of the United Kingdom as a whole; keeping Hitler at bay took second place to keeping Irish unity at bay. The Stormont government's failure to provide proper bomb shelters resulted in more than 700 people dying in Belfast during a single German air-raid. Fisk has unearthed a document in which the truly disgusting Dawson Bates, Stormont Minister of Home Affairs, says there were 5,000 people (he meant Catholics) who were 'unbilletable owing to personal habits which are subhuman'.

The industrious Fisk wrote this book while picking up at least three journalism awards as Middle East correspondent of *The Times*. Its research is a monument to his energy; if there is a drawback for the general reader, it is the amount of detail which has been packed in. The book groans under the weight of 2,210 footnotes, which add no fewer

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than 50 pages to its total length.

That said, it is an authoritative work by a journalist who was the best British newspaper correspondent seen in Ireland during the present troubles. He has shed much new light on an important but neglected period in the long, sad history of Anglo-Irish relations. This excellent book is essential reading for serious students of the subject. □

EUROPE
R. W. Johnson

Conventional wisdom

Postwar: The Dawn of Today's Europe
RICHARD MAYNE *Thames & Hudson* £10.50

'Modernisation', wrote Jean Monnet in the First Report of his *Commissariat au Plan*, 'is not a state of affairs: it is a state of mind.' This thought returns to one repeatedly as one reads Richard Mayne's account of how the nations of Western Europe coped with post-war reconstruction. Conservatives and Marxists alike are fond of saying that one reason things evolved differently in Britain is that we have always had a uniquely subtle and canny ruling class. This was, in the post-war period at least, quite desperately untrue: what shines forth instead is a rigid and defensive parochialism, a nit-picking insularity which guaranteed failure in competition with the bolder, more open modernism of our Continental counterparts.

As Mayne points out, peace and the Marshall Plan saw a vast swarm of American soldiers, businessmen, bankers and technocrats descend on Europe, preaching efficiency, productivity, modern management methods and general can-do-ism. They were appalled to find that what took 100 man hours to produce in America took 180-200 in Britain, 240 in Germany, 250 in Belgium and 250-260 in France. But the British, with the highest production and the best productivity in Europe, were also the most resistant. Time after time the Americans were told that things like Kleenex, jeans, cost accounting or modern management simply would never catch on over here. The country which most warmly embraced the new ways was Germany: the Germans and the Americans liked dealing with each other. Both sides were blunt, rational and willing to change to whatever worked. 'It's uncomplicated; they get right down to the point' is the American verdict quoted by Mayne. Britons instinctively shrank or retreated into loftiness. Sir Stafford Cripps had, indeed, to reassure an alarmed House of Commons that there would be no 'broad investigation of British industry by American specialists'.

Similarly, Britain had sold off £1,118 million of foreign assets and incurred £3 billions of foreign debt to fund her war effort. With peace Britain was able to garner far more foreign loans than any other European country – over £5 billion from the US and Canada alone. But this was quite largely squandered as Britain continued to maintain one and a half million men under arms to guard not just an Empire but Egypt, Palestine and Greece. (The Germans had, of course, no defence budget at all.) When the Americans pushed for the formation of a European common market (which Britain would, inevitably, have dominated), Lord Franks (then, as now, the paragon of conventional wisdom) dismissed the idea almost out of hand. When it was proposed to move the Volkswagen car works to Britain, British businessmen dismissed the idea because the Beetle was obviously too ugly and noisy to succeed.

Above all, the British effectively refused to plan. In Italy, France and Germany determined large-scale investment by the state or the banks was targeted to modernise infrastructure or secure key national objectives. In Britain no such effort was made: even under Labour there was so little real grasp of what proper planning *was* that the term was often used as meaning 'controls'. These were agreed to be a bad thing, and both Wilson and the Tories made much of their 'bonfire of controls' without having any alternative vision at all. The results were remarkable: by 1949 Britain was spending 11.2% of its national income on welfare while the Germans were managing 18.5%, but Britain fondly believed its welfare services were the envy of the world. When Germany outperformed Britain economically this was attributed to the terrible burden of British taxation, but in 1955 taxes were 29% of Britain's GNP and 32.2% of Germany's. And much of our tax revenue was pouring down the drain in Suez, Korea, Cyprus and so on. The truth was, right across the board, that the Germans knew what they wanted, planned for it and got it, while the British drifted, wasted their money and patted themselves on the back for being such clever chaps.

THIS POINT emerges only implicitly from Richard Mayne's book which is essentially a pastiche rather than a panorama of European events from 1945 to 1957. Apart from the political events and economic statistics, we meet Wally Hammond and André Gide, Ealing Studios and Jean-Paul Sartre, U and non-U, Bannister's four-minute mile, *The Mousetrap*, the New Look and Bessie Braddock. A great deal of this has the feeling of warmed over journalism and cinema reviews. The general theme of the book is also only too familiar: Europe is on its knees, morally and materially ravaged; but look here comes the heart-warming cavalry over the hill (the Marshall Plan); now the Europeans are grittily getting their act together again; and finally, in a great blaze of emotional glory, they embark on 'The Road to Rome' (Mayne's last chapter title). Mayne, like many other Eurocrats, is a passionate Europhiliac and his conclusion on the signing of the EEC Treaty is typically inspirational: 'The victims of World War II had not died pointlessly. They had helped to defeat unimaginable evil. And their memory had not been betrayed.' Despite such purple prose, the book has a conventionally centrist tone and is almost overpoweringly bland.

The most extraordinary thing about this book, though, is simply the fact that it is being published in 1983. There is nothing in it, in terms of facts, people or opinions, which would have been new in 1963. Indeed, such a simple-minded paean of praise to European unity would have been more understandable then. Now it is simply bad history. If one is eager for the symbolism of European regeneration it comes naturally to make much of the early post-war baby boom, for example. In retrospect it seems clear that the accompanying divorce boom of the same period was to have far greater long-term social significance. ♦

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The same is true, more importantly, of the Marshall Plan. In Mayne's version the notion that the Americans might have had any motives of their own for the Plan is mentioned only in an aside as 'a cynical' view, while the Russians' rejection of the Plan is seen as a simple piece of malevolent stupidity. This will really no longer do. Adequate documentation has been available for some years now on how the Marshall Plan fitted into American strategic conceptions of a liberalised world economy under US tutelage; of how the promise of Marshall Aid was used to lever Communists out of government coalitions all over Europe and then to lever those governments into NATO. Similarly, it is now tolerably clear that the US offer of aid was nicely calculated to exclude the USSR. Indeed, State Department officials were highly sensitive to the fact that they could never achieve Congressional support for the Plan if it meant funnelling aid to the USSR. Where Stalin was stupid was in not seeing that he could have torpedoed the Plan completely simply by agreeing to accept Marshall Aid. □

JUSTICE
Christopher Price

Alternatives

The Helen Smith Affair
PAUL FOOT *Fontana* £2.50
Inquest—Helen Smith, The Whole Truth?
GORDON WILSON and DAVE HARRISON
Methuen £1.95

These books should be read consecutively, Foot first, Wilson and Harrison second; they concern two important national institutions, our Coroners' Courts and our Foreign Office – both perceived as being in the business of helping the ordinary citizen. Both books decide that neither carried out this task particularly well. In spite of its title, Paul Foot's book is essentially the 'Ron Smith Saga' – the story of a Conservative Yorkshire ex-policeman who wouldn't take 'no' for an answer when told by the powers-that-be that his daughter had died in an 'accident', after making love on a balcony. It's a story of incredible perseverance in the face of what he increasingly saw as a class cover-up between public-school-educated diplomats (whom he'd never encountered before) and those affluent West Yorkshire professionals he'd known as a young policeman. Wilson and Harrison, in effect, support this thesis; after analysis of the various 'cover-up' allegations – by diplomats, pathologists, coroners – they observe: 'There is however another type of cover-up which operates at a completely different level. There is nothing sinister about it. It probably operates in all walks of life all the time and nobody thinks of it in terms of "cover-up".' It was this easy Establishment empathy of assumptions and speech patterns that Ron Smith simply could not cope with. It fuelled his anger and gave him the necessary reserves of energy to push his campaign forward to the modest levels of success which he has achieved so far.

I leave the reader to judge the 'cover-up' evidence. Where the foreign office undoubtedly stands convicted is in its sheer inability to translate. They utterly misled the press by their misapprehension that '*coup de couer*' meant a 'stroke'; and they crucially mixed up the Arabic words for 'accidental' and 'traumatic'. Ron Smith puts all this down to deviousness and treachery; he might be right. But, knowing some of the characters involved, I incline to the incompetence theory.

The case also raises the unreformed (substantially since 1194) condition of the coroners we employ and the inquests they hold. They are the only remaining vestige of statutory, inquisitorial justice in England and, as such, sit uneasily with lawyers accustomed to the hurly-burly of cross-examination. With politically charged cases – where the behaviour of the State, the police or the prison service is in question – coroners are all too often simply not up to the job. It can't be long now before we hand over such cases to a judge (whether with assessors to help him or her) and accord legal aid to the distressed or aggrieved relatives of the dead.

The books present a nice contrast of style. Paul Foot is a journalist to the core and his book is the better in that he worked closely with Ron Smith as the only journalist Ron really trusted. So it's a curious amalgam of two utterly different minds – of folk who feel they're on to a story where they have something in common and trying to say it to their mutual satisfaction. Wilson and Harrison say they're journalists – and they are. But Wilson is also an Open University lecturer and the sociology shows through somewhat. Still, their final 'alternative summing up' – brilliantly done and probably the only way to spell it out in view of the laws of libel – gets far nearer to a consistent and coherent view of what actually happened than anything in the Foot book. They're both riveting accounts – and better than any similar fiction on the same subject for my money. □

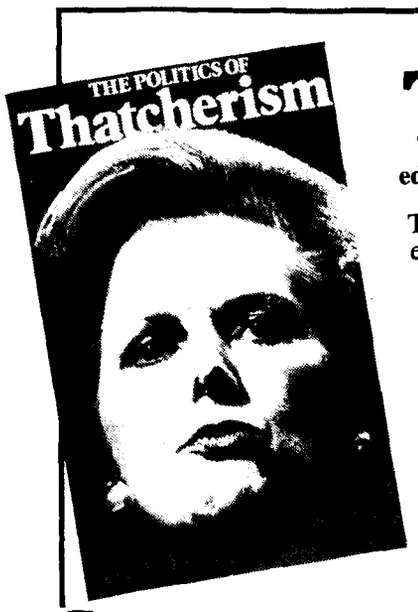
LITERATURE
Patricia Craig

Private lives

A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel, 1914-1939
NICOLA BEAUMAN *Virago* £8.95 & £4.95

'Think of what our nation stands for', John Betjeman wrote in 1940 (supplying Nicola Beauman with an apt quotation): 'books from Boots and country lanes'. In this study the author turns her attention to those commonly disregarded books from Boots Lending Library, the work of authors like E. M. Hull and Ethel M. Dell, as well as the more reputable middlebrow contingent (Vera Brittain, Winifred Holtby, E. Arnot Robertson *et al*), speculating about who was reading them and discussing what they contained. We learn straight away that the typical reader of such novels was a middle-class woman, probably suffering from a 'bruised spirit' which required 'boosting', and that fiction was preferred to other forms of alleviation because the novel 'was easy to pick up and put down'.

It's plain by now that *A Very Great Profession* is not going to surprise us with its insights into the function and value of popular



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literature or encourage us to laugh at the triteness and extravagances peculiar to the genre. Claud Cockburn and Arthur Marshall might as well not have shown how the old-fashioned bestseller ought to be treated, for all Nicola Beauman has learnt from their method. In place of an illuminating commentary on the 'women's novels' under scrutiny, we find only a reiteration of the ideas they promulgated. One heroine, we're told, 'allots a place in her heart to the sacred remembrance of her dead lover'. Another acquires a 'new, cheerier outlook on life' after renouncing a live one.

The preposterous plots are summarised without irony by Mrs Beauman. You get the feeling she considers condescension a greater hazard than undue seriousness as far as the critic of the low-brow novel is concerned. Certainly she doesn't mean to underestimate the books she is writing about. 'A work of art of outstanding quality' is how she describes Enid Bagnold's *The Squire*. What is it about? Well, a lot of it (we gather) is to do with the joys of breast-feeding. Cecily Hamilton's 'masterpiece', *William – An Englishman*, is praised for the way its emotions are understated – Mrs Beauman actually uses this word, before going on to quote from the novel: 'Beneath his feet the foundations of the earth were reeling'.

Such ineptitude is surprising, but what's even worse is the proliferation of clichés and truisms which come at you like a horde of eye-flies. What are we to make of a critic who can't be bothered to think of a phrase more telling than 'domestic bliss'? 'Male-dominated society', 'treading a well-worn path', 'lent the novel its wide appeal' – so it goes on. Do we really need to be told that 'war is essentially a masculine occupation'? And is there anyone left in England who hasn't grasped the fact that women, at a certain period in recent history, 'were beginning to break free from restraints'? A hundred works of social and literary history have told us so in the last few years alone. Women's inner natures and how these were stifled is another topic that interests Mrs Beauman. Her comparisons are pretty facile: in the middle of extolling Rosamond Lehmann's *The Weather in the Streets* she suddenly confides to the reader her own sensations during pregnancy, and adds: 'Things were not very different for Olivia'. Wherever you would expect a cogent point to be made, you are likely to find gush: 'a warm, very human personality', 'more loving, more life-giving and spiritual qualities' and so on. The effect of all this is to set off in the reader a craving for the most reprehensible kind of men's novel – something by Henry Miller, say, or Mickey Spillane.

Mrs Beauman has read widely, if not well. She is always referring to novels not covered by her sub-title – but only to show how the same themes and attitudes recurred all the way down the literary scale. Your attention is drawn to the fact that writers of fiction write about human relations. 'One of the most poignant themes is the lover who is already married to someone else', Mrs Beauman says; 'Tolstoy used it to memorable effect in *Anna Karenina*.' If this bathetic pronouncement takes your breath away, you should avoid what follows: 'He has had many imitators, for example Noel Coward in *Brief Encounter*.' This argues a *very* brief encounter with either Tolstoy or Noel Coward, and adds nothing at all to our knowledge of either. Indeed, almost the only notable detail contained in *A Very Great Profession* is the fact that E. M. Hull, author of *The Sheik*, was married to a pig-farmer and lived quietly in the country. But Mrs Beauman makes nothing of this. □

EGYPT
David Gilmour

Illusions

Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat
MOHAMED HEIKAL *Deutsch* £10.95

Anwar Sadat considered himself 'the last great pharaoh' of Egypt and told President Carter that he was the successor to Rameses II. Dr Kissinger shared the Egyptian leader's extravagant assessment of himself, reversing his early judgment of Sadat as 'a bombastic clown' and comparing him, puzzlingly, with Bismarck.

More plausibly, Mohamed Heikal points out the similarities between Sadat and the Khedive Ismail, both of them rulers who spent much time decorating palaces for themselves and overturning the policies of their more distinguished predecessors. But in the sheer breadth of his megalomania, Sadat surely resembles no-one so much as Mussolini. There was nothing brutal about Sadat and he was not in any sense a fascist, but in his endless delusions about himself, his power and his destiny, he was very much like the Italian dictator. There was the same love of strutting about in smart uniforms, the same greed for headlines, the same love of acting, the same laziness and distaste for office work, the same belief in their own intuition, the same absurd over-optimism based on nothing more solid than a conviction of their own infallibility. Both men surrounded themselves with suave and incompetent toadies who merely told them how wonderful they were.

Sadat loved broad gestures and expansive oratory and had no time for details. There was an attractive side to him, a generosity and a distaste for haggling, which Mr Heikal does not sufficiently recognize. It was these qualities which endeared him to the West and conveyed the mistaken impression that he was a statesman. Yet, as the author points out, Sadat's generosity was hardly in the national interest. When he offered the western desert for Austria to dump its nuclear waste in, or when he rifled the Egyptian Museum for antiquities to give 'my friend the Shah' or 'my friend Onassis', he was giving what was not his to give. His

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expulsion of the Russian advisers in 1972 was the kind of bold and dramatic gesture which he loved but it was not the act of a statesman. A real statesman would have extracted a political reward from the Americans. As Kissinger said later, 'Why didn't he tell us what he was going to do? We would have paid well for it.' Perhaps Sadat thought that the Americans would behave towards him with the same frankness and generosity he showed towards them. But he was wrong. 'My friends Nixon, Ford and Carter' took what Sadat offered them but refused to give him what he needed – an Israeli withdrawal from the 1967 conquests – although they did go to his funeral.

Sadat used to claim that he had the Egyptian people behind him and that his opponents consisted only of a handful of communists, Muslim fanatics and intellectuals such as Heikal. Perhaps he had lost touch with the feelings of the Egyptians so comprehensively that he really believed this, although it is barely credible. Opposition to Sadat was perhaps neither quite as widespread nor as virulent as Mr Heikal suggests, but it was obviously there. There must be something wrong with a Third World leader if he is mourned by three American ex-presidents and not by his own countrymen.

Mohamed Heikal was the most conspicuous of Sadat's critics inside Egypt and so this book is bound to be considered biased by many people. After all, Sadat put Heikal under house arrest and later imprisoned him; towards the end of his life he became so obsessed by Heikal that he even spent an hour denouncing him on television. It would not be surprising, therefore, if Heikal returned the antipathy. In fact he claims that he was actually 'very fond of Sadat as a man' and opposed only to his policies. This claim is not wholly convincing because the stories he tells of Sadat portray him as a liar, a braggart and altogether a not very likeable person. Yet Heikal's book seems to be motivated far more by his profound disagreement with what Sadat was doing to Egypt than by any personal rancour. And it is on his criticism of Sadat's policies that Heikal – as well, of course, as Sadat – should be judged.

Heikal's argument is that Sadat damaged his country and antagonised his countrymen by the alliance with the United States, the treaty with Israel and the oppression and corruption of his regime. It is difficult to disagree with this verdict. There can be little doubt that Egypt's shift towards the West, with all this entailed, was deeply unpopular with the majority of Egyptians. It meant far more than just the expulsion of the Russians and their substitution by Americans. It brought with it vulgarity and ostentation, Wimpy bars and night-clubs sprouting in the suburbs of Cairo, and a new parasite class of 'fat cats' emerging so quickly that by 1981 there were apparently 17,000 millionaires in one of the world's poorer countries. Nor did the new rich seem to feel any obligation towards Egypt's millions of slum-dwellers. As one intellectual complained, 'their idea of the state is that it is simply a mechanism for protecting the slumber of the rich from the insomnia of the poor'.

A still more unpopular consequence of Sadat's pro-Western policy was the breaking of Egypt's relationship with the rest of the Arab world. As Heikal points out, Egypt had been in a real sense the capital of the Third World and Nasser's claim that it was at the centre of three circles – the Arab, the African and the Islamic – was a plausible one. Under Sadat, Egypt became the 'centre of nowhere', turning its back on its history and leaving its Arab 'brothers' to the fate decreed for them by Menachem Begin. Mr Heikal's final judgment – that the devastation of Beirut last year was a logical consequence of Sadat's policy – will no doubt be derided, but I do not see how it can be rebutted. Whatever ideas Sadat and Carter may have had at Camp David, it is clearly Begin's view which has prevailed. The Israelis rightly believed that the return of Sinai was a small price to pay for neutralising the Egyptians. With the largest and strongest Arab country out of the reckoning, the Israelis could behave with impunity in the rest of the Middle East. Sadat certainly wanted peace and no doubt he believed his policy would achieve it. But because that policy was based on the wholly mistaken assumption that Israel and the United States also wanted peace, it was a disastrous and predictable failure. □

Paul Groves

Tyrell's Barn

Aladdin's Cave was great
but Tyrell's Barn was greater.
Beyond the five-bar gate
the yard stood, and beyond
the yard the banned
barn, the alligator

shed, the cayman isle.
Darkness stood at the door.
You never saw her smile.
Her secrets were her own.
Venturers turned to stone
inside her; and the roar

of silence deafened there.
Old Tyrell was long dead.
Mad he had been for sure.
His spirit stalked the place –
a disembodied face,
a rancid turnip head,

an ectoplasmic rustle
at which cats' ears bent back.
The paddock was all thistle.
The house was a bad shell.
Tyrell's Barn was whole,
however, from the crack

of dawn to lingering dusks.
I never went inside.
The risks were all. The risks
were visible as print.
It wore its evil scent
with unrepentant pride.

CRITICISM
Nicholas Jacobs

Dark times

Walter Benjamin
JULIAN ROBERTS *Macmillan* £15 & £5.95
Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption
RICHARD WOLIN *Columbia* £16.75

Thomas Mann likened Walter Benjamin to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in showing little respect for the difference between essayist and philosopher. Author of essays on the philosophy of language, of an apparently recondite study of German tragic drama, translator of Proust, historian of photography, critic and friend of Brecht, Jewish mystic, German Marxist, industrious literary reviewer, indulgent intellectual *flâneur* – what was he? One of the inevitable drawbacks of books like these – both theses – is that their authors feel bound to work hard at explaining the coexistence of, or reconciling, the different personae, instead of accepting the fact that – like the leading character of one of Benjamin's favourite works, Goethe's play *Stella* – it is possible to be in love with more than

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one person at the same time.

Roberts is strong on biography and historical and intellectual background, but he has worked hardest at impressing his examiners, and readers without a working knowledge of 20th-century German philosophy might not – as he himself intimates – want to accompany him all the way. Wolin covers little biographical ground and focuses on a narrower selection of Benjamin's works in order to identify the essential theme suggested in his title.

Roberts's book is in three parts. The first two provide an excellent introduction to Benjamin's life and intellectual times. The third is a theoretical discussion of his work. Roberts is particularly good on Benjamin's relation to Zionism and the inevitable strength of its appeal in a declining Weimar Germany, on the extent of Benjamin's Marxism, and on his commitment to the Communist camp up to 1938. Though there are lapses of tone (he writes of Benjamin's 'conversion to Communism', suggests his interest in Zionism was a result of his failure to become an academic, and says that he eventually didn't go to Palestine because 'he was better off in Berlin'), these go against the grain of the discussion, which is based on careful use of all of Benjamin's work including the published letters. A popular misconception about Benjamin is that he wrote a brilliant thesis to obtain tenure (he already had a PhD) – later published as *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* – which was unjustifiably rejected, thus presumably frustrating a career as a German academic. Roberts shows how Benjamin wrote this work – which he admitted was arcane and could have been fully understood only by a friend who died before it was published – in expectation of such rejection. In an apparent digression on the history of German higher education and the character of the German academic community in the 1920s, Roberts shows how impossible it would have been for Benjamin to have made the necessary intellectual accommodation – and what a loss would have been suffered had he done so.

Benjamin was described by an early associate as 'helpless' and without commonsense with regard to 'the conduct of life'. This is reinforced by Hannah Arendt's full-length portrait (in *Men in Dark Times*) and was indeed borne out by his in-many-ways hapless life and eventual suicide. He certainly seemed to invite those who knew what was best for him. He was bullied, morally by the Zionist Gershom Scholem who condemned him to spiritual suicide for his association with Brecht, and intellectually by Theodor Adorno. Roberts does not quite do justice to the Scholem relationship which was marked by Scholem's genuine and warmly expressed love and admiration for Benjamin and his work, which only made his disapproval more painful and dangerous. For years Benjamin gave Scholem – in order to please him – the idea that he was learning Hebrew and would join him in Palestine. When he finally wrote to say he was doing neither, he could bring himself to write to his old friend only *in French*. Roberts misses this. He is, however, good on Benjamin's relation with Adorno, who tried so hard to fashion Benjamin in his own image.

Roberts's description of a robust Marxist Benjamin able to stand up to and reject Adorno's critical assaults, seems unjustified in view of the second, more abstract version of Benjamin's Baudelaire essay, written at Adorno's insistence. However, one of the main virtues of Roberts's study overall is that, without in any way reducing his unconventionality, it does give long overdue recognition to the strength of Benjamin's commitment to Marxism in his later work, and to the Soviet Union and the German Communists in the anti-fascist struggle in the Thirties. He does this soberly and with much quotation of evidence, unlike others on the Left who responded to an early attempt to depoliticise Benjamin by overpoliticising him.

THE ATTITUDE to Adorno's intervention in Benjamin's work characterises an important difference between these two books. Wolin is heavily influenced by the Frankfurt School, although he on the whole avoids jargon and writes more attractively than Roberts. That his book is a remarkable achievement of critical analysis, written with poise and generosity and without indulgence, must be explained by the comfort of the position from which he writes. He is pro-Adorno ('unquestionably the better Marxist of the two'), anti-Brecht ('nefarious influence'), and optimistic about 'advanced industrial societies'. It follows that he is uncritical of the esoteric mysticism in the early Benjamin, favours his writings on the philosophy of language over his Marxist-inspired later work, and sees his commitment as displaced theology rather than in political terms. However, Wolin's book should by no means be rejected by those who think of Benjamin as a Marxist critic. It contains by far the best detailed discussion of the two Benjamin essays which have had the greatest impact in Britain – 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducability' and 'The Author as Producer' – which, thanks to John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* and Hans Magnus Enzensberger's article, 'The Consciousness Industry', have made Benjamin into something of an avant-garde media technologue for the British. Wolin's criticism of these two pieces is impressive. He is not the first to point out their technological determinism, but he shows in addition how they are in conflict with Benjamin's other work.

In an important respect these books are premature as they were written just before the publication of their subject's greatest work, his Paris Arcades project. What is most needed for English-language readers now are more translations, and for some publisher to take on the daunting but ultimately rewarding task of producing an English edition from the thousand pages of the Paris Arcades work published last year in West Germany. □

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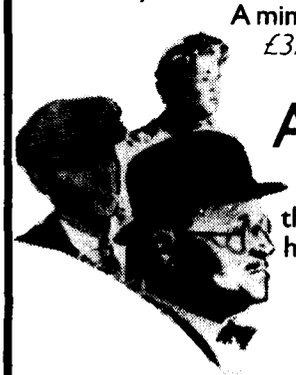

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The Conspiracy and Murder of Mao's Heir

YAO MING-LE *Collins* £9.95

This book purports to be an exposé, exploding the official Chinese story that Lin Biao, Mao Zedong's stipulated successor, failed to assassinate the Chairman and fled to Mongolia on a plane which crashed, killing him, his wife and his son, on 12 September 1971. Supposedly based on secret party archives long concealed even from the Party's rank and file, the replacement story alleges that Marshal Lin was scheming with Moscow to provoke a Sino-Soviet war in which Mao would be killed, Lin would succeed him, and, with Brezhnev, take over the world. But the Russians wouldn't play, Mao found out, and after feeding Lin a terrific meal, had him blown up in his car on the way home. Only Lin's son got away in the plane that crashed.

Collins has withdrawn its original claim that the author of these revelations is 'a high Party official'. Now they say 'he is a Chinaman writing in Chinese', which narrows it down to about 500 million possibilities. Unfortunately for Collins and the other six members of what they themselves call an 'international conspiracy' to shock us with the truth about China, what is believable in this book is not new, and the rest could have been concocted by any China specialist with flair. The outlines of Lin Biao's career are well known. So is the tittle-tattle of sex and corruption at the apex of Chinese official life. They are always telling us about it when they conduct purges.

So who is 'Yao Ming-le'? Until Collins persuades us otherwise – and it would take a mighty Sino-Trevor-Roper indeed – 'Yao' could be in Taiwan writing books to make the Peking leaders look like demented crooks or crooked loonies. Or 'Yao' could be a team in Russia's anti-Chinese black propaganda confectionery, sometimes known as First August Radio, which regularly issues slightly convincing inside stories about Chinese high politics. The Soviets come out of this tale looking wise and restrained. There is an especially flattering reference to Yuri Andropov who in 1971 was toiling obscurely as head of the KGB.

There happens to be a readable novel on the Lin Biao affair: *The Chinese Assassin*, by Anthony Gray, the Reuters man imprisoned by the Chinese during the Cultural Revolution. Gray sounds as reliable as 'Yao Ming-le', and at least we know who he is.

Jonathan Mirsky

Travels With My Father

DANIEL and FELIKS TOPOLSKI *Elm Tree* £9.95

It was, of course, a good idea for Daniel Topolski to tour South America with his famous father Feliks. Just the sort of good idea to appeal to the BBC and, sure enough, much of the trip was filmed. But both the film crew and the famous father made it difficult for Daniel ever to be much more than a tourist, which rather restricts the interest of the book. Admittedly he tried – often escaping from his distinguished, elderly and temporarily limping father to hitch-hike and rough it through various countries. But, despite the good fortune, from a dramatic point of view, of being thrown into gaol in Paraguay, his account is no more interesting than that of anyone else bumming around the continent, and certainly lacks the novelist's eye of Bruce Chatwin and Paul Theroux, who have covered much of the same ground. He generalises about the 'Latin Temperament', falls into conversation with local lads and into bed with local lasses. (And not only bed, for he seems to have got a special kick out of copulating at well-known tourist spots, like the highest pinnacle of the lost city of Macchu Picchu.)

It is an honest enough account and Daniel has a clear eye for the absurdities of the television feature – the film crew arriving with a pre-determined image of the country and forcing reality to fit it. Respectable farmers are made to dress up as the *vaqueiros* they once were; a small town mounts an entire festival just for the camera. But the best things about the book are Feliks Topolski's shimmering drawings. We are used to seeing South America in glaring colours, but these black and white sketches show a continent of Don Quixotes and Sancho Panzas, and preposterous jumbled baroque cities covered in signs and slogans.

John Scotney

Rebel Advocate: A Biography of Gerald Gardiner

MURIEL BOX *Gollancz* £10.95

When Gerald (now Lord) Gardiner was a young man at Harrow, his father came to tea at the house of a socialist, pacifist master. He was enraged to notice a copy of the *Nation* on a table. Deeply conservative, Robert Septimus vowed there and then to send Gerald's younger brother to Eton. At this point Gerald began to read the paper himself. He went on to become Chairman of the Board of the *New Statesman and Nation*, and later still he was Wilson's Lord Chancellor in the administrations of 1964-70.

Lord Gardiner has the distinction of having been called a 'socialist fanatic' by one of Her Majesty's judges, and has been described as 'the greatest architect of the reform of the law' since the 1880s. But his Permanent Secretary in the Lord Chancellor's office was also able to describe him as 'fundamentally conservative in thought and manner'.

This great reformer never really wanted to be a lawyer. His real love was the stage and he had a distinguished career in OUDS. Emerging from Oxford with a fourth class degree and an allowance of £700 a year, he joined the Bar in 1925 largely to appease his father.

In the light of this it is perhaps strange that Gerald Gardiner had a reputation for 'coolness' and never indulged in histrionics at the Bar. He played a leading role in some of the great cases of his time: the Leon Uris libel case; the ETU ballot-rigging trial; the seminal trade union case of Rookes v Barnard; 'Lady Chatterley'; and the Liberace libel case; and he became involved in political trials in Portugal and Greece.

His lifelong concern, however, was law reform. He was instrumental in the creation of the Law Commission and was one of the most vocal advocates in the Lords of the Abolition of the Death Penalty Act (1965). This idea of 'reform' is the key to Lord Gardiner's career. He said '. . . when I talk about law reform, I am envisaging a major overhaul of the whole of our law'; but he was no revolutionary. His wife recounts how he helped to set up the Society of Labour Lawyers when it became clear that the Haldane Society of socialist lawyers had become hopelessly infiltrated by Communists in the late 1940s.

The book reads, in accordance with its author's intention, like 'a sheer labour of love'. But there should be a place next to it for the more critical and comprehensive future biography merited by a figure of Lord Gardiner's stature.

Mark Benney

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FICTION
Roger Lewis

Left-overs

The Handyman
PENELOPE MORTIMER *Allen Lane* £6.95
No Excuses
BARRIE KEEFFE *Methuen* £7.50 and £1.50
My Aunt Christina and Other Stories
J. I. M. STEWART *Gollancz* £8.95

Penelope Mortimer is supremely good at uncovering the tiny psychopathologies of everyday life. **The Handyman** would seem to be a light comedy about Phyllis Muspratt coming to terms with bereavement, but behind the limpid chat and glasses of sherry malign forces are at work. The novel tips out the envelope in which politeness and social decorum are flimsily sealed. The first knell comes once the spouse has been safely buried and the mourners have left the widow to her own devices. Phyllis tends not to be invited out because she is 'some sort of left-over', a redundant appendage now that her respectable husband has been removed. Her answer is to abandon her past and make it new in a rural idyll. The village of Cryck, however, isn't a sleepy retreat where old ladies make jam and cheery rectors make beaming calls at teatime. On the contrary, the streets are full of yobs on motorbikes, at the outskirts is a shanty-town of glowering second-generation hippies, and in the shops Phyllis is met with surly service.

An ally might be Rebecca Broune, a novelist who is holed up as a recluse. Yet she isn't like Margaret Rutherford in tweed bonnet and cultured pearls; rather she is dyspeptic and hardened by professional and personal 'little outrages' inflicted upon her. Rebecca's latest husband is a fat businessman who keeps her waiting in an antechamber like an underling and who refuses to pay the medical bills for their retarded daughter.

Phyllis Muspratt finds Rebecca's rebarbative manner uncompelling. By the same token, Rebecca finds her neighbour's cheeriness gushingly sentimental. Penelope Mortimer doesn't turn them into bosom pals (as would a bad writer) but ensures they keep a wary distance while nevertheless conjoining them in the figure of the handyman. The cottage into which Phyllis moves needs decorating and so she shops about for help. Rebecca tells her about – and advises her against – Fred Skerry, who is at once commissioned. His dapper respect impresses the widow: he is punctual and meticulously tidy. Friendship appears to burgeon and Phyllis is flattered by his manner and pleased to have his company. Compliments become flirtatious by degrees and relations grow an uneasy twinge. Skerry's charm seeps into a mood of sinister predatoriness which breaks loose in a drunken grope.

Old age begins when being of use ends. In *The Handyman* the heroine is elderly the second she no longer has a husband for whom harmlessly to drudge. For Shelley Maze in **No Excuses,** to be old is when present hits were recorded before present fans were born. Inside Keeffe's fable (currently to be seen as a TV series too) about the life of a monied singer lurks a folk-tale about rags to riches and its concomitant price. Shelley has been successful but she is now the wrong side of thirty and her private life is a booze-soaked shambles. Fame has made her 'like an astronaut'; it has caused her to drift in a fug of sensory deprivation. Her father uses the same image: 'You looked a right alien from outer space.' Shelley thinks of herself as a 'bastard angel', a defiled heavenly body breaking up above the earth: 'Twinkle, twinkle, ageing star/Tell us where the fuck you are.'

Besides the play upon the notion of stardom, Keeffe also makes Shelley a modern Jocasta. Followed by a youthful groupie, she eventually allows him into her bed, only to discover that it is her long-lost son Billy (who 'has no idea he lost his virginity to his mother'). Appositely, the *Angels* have a current hit called 'Oedipus Rock'. Maybe it should've been 'Oedipus Wrecks'.

Shelley hides out in a mansion: 'A castle built by a king for his whores. Bought by a rock 'n' roll whore.' Here she sets up a kingdom of conspicuous waste. Rock stars are the new aristocracy with a court of sycophants and sybaritic excess. Champagne is a delicacy abused, shaken up and used like a water pistol. Max, the inherited butler, organises a luxurious dinner party with vintage wines and silver cutlery. His servility niggles Shelley, who contrives to humiliate him. Her drunken friends smash the antique crockery and make the Great Hall a pig-bin. The scene, brutish and vindictive, 'had a medieval feel'. Shelley's ire is provoked by an occasion many years previously when her band performed at a party given by the snooty owner of the house in which she now lives. Max was there then, and it is his hauteur she recalls and which motivates present hatred. Paying off an old grudge she becomes an avenging angel, a Greek Fury. Destroying her past, however, endangers her future: the band is fired, her manager has to sell the mansion, and an ex-lover is discovered in the moat. Shelley finds herself 'middle-aged, no home, no kids – I've done nothing'.

J. I. M. Stewart is a retired fellow of an Oxford college and **My Aunt Christina** is a book of short stories, each with an academic ring. Ostensibly tales of the unexpected, denouements can in fact be easily guessed. As a consolation the collection turns into an Eng. Lit. kit, with allusions made to other works. *The Aspern Papers* is behind Aunt Christina's secret trove and also 'The Doctor's Son', in which a vicar's annotations are found to be brilliant pieces of textual criticism. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is the progenitor of Perley's pictures – by an artist who paints not what he sees but what will be seen. Michael Furey, the singer, is the name of the plaintive voice who sang to Gretta Conroy in Joyce's 'The Dead'. □

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ANTIQUITIES
Jules Lubbock

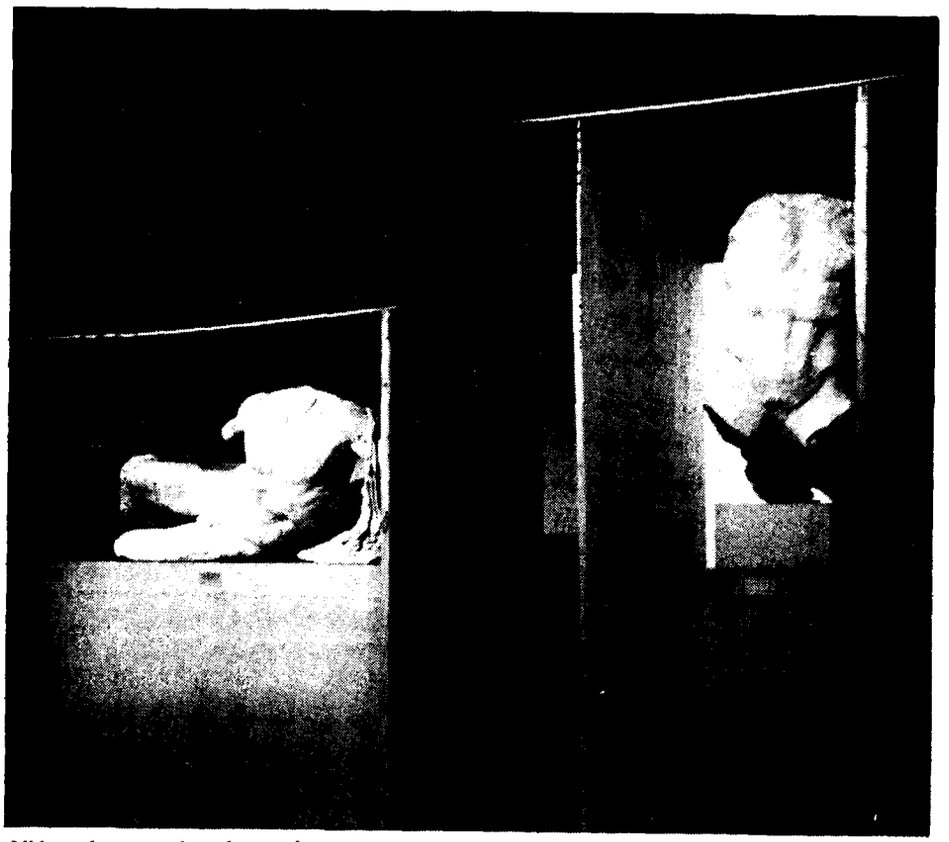
Whose marbles?

> Where the body of the late Emperor Theodore lay, I found a mob of officers and men rudely jostling each other to get a small piece of his blood-stained shirt.
>
> An important matter remained. Fifteen elephant- and two hundred mule-loads, the paraphernalia of a thousand churches, glittered in the morning sunlight, and jostling one another were the mob of buyers. One bought a cross of silver, another a censer, richly illuminated bibles found ready purchasers. Mr Holmes, the worthy representative of the British Museum, outdid all in most things.

Similar scenes to the Prize Agents' auction of plunder from Magdala after the defeat of Theodore III of Abyssinia by the British Punitive Expedition of 1868 were enacted in Benin, in Burma and elsewhere during the colonial expansion. The object was partly mercenary, but primarily punitive: to strip the ruler of his power and to subjugate his people by expropriating the symbols of their national identity. The Ashanti War of 1900 was waged to capture the Golden Stool, which embodied the spirit of the Ashanti nation. We failed to get it, but major items of their regalia are now in the Royal Collection and in the British Museum. Theodore's hair is in the Imperial War Museum. The assertion of the Director of the BM, David Wilson, that they were never party to plunder is simply untrue.

Now former colonies are claiming the return of the most significant cultural property under the mandate of a UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee set up in 1978. Melina Mercouri's appeal for the return of the Elgin Marbles is a major test case. The Marbles were not strictly speaking the spoils of war, and Greece was an Ottoman not a British colony; but they were not purchased by Elgin, as is often claimed. His agents in Athens wrenched them from the Parthenon under a permit of July 1801 granted him, the British Ambassador to the Ottomans, as part of a diplomatic deal – the British helped to drive the French out of Egypt and to suppress nationalist uprisings.

Moreover, in 1799 Elgin had planned to make plaster-casts and drawings as models for British manufacturers and artists. It was only when French diplomats returned to Athens after the Peace of Amiens in 1802 that he gave orders for the Parthenon to be stripped. He knew what the French Government had accomplished in Egypt. So, for Elgin, Phidias's sculptures were more commercial than cultural capital, of use to the British in the trade war with France. His aim was never to save them from the vandalism of the Turks, it was to save them from the hands of the French!



All boxed up – and ready to go?

'We have absolutely no intention of ever returning the Elgin Marbles', say Wilson and his Trustees; though they will consider the return of minor parts of monuments, and some objects of major religious significance. They insist that their legal title is sound; that the collections have become, with the passing of time, more part of the cultural heritage of Britain than of the original countries, that Elgin preserved the Marbles from destruction, and the BM has conserved them. Above all, they make the emotive and hyperbolic claim that to return *even one* object would be the thin end of the wedge – everything would be up for grabs, and the BM, the greatest representative museum of the cultural heritage of mankind, would be destroyed, a loss far greater than that of the Parthenon, comparable to the destruction of the Library of Alexandria. Finally, Clause 5 of the British Museum Act of 1963 forbids them to alienate anything other than a duplicate. An enabling amendment would place the museum at the mercy of any government who wanted to provide a sweetener in a bilateral deal (as happened with the Elgin Marbles).

The emotional force of their case is undeniable, but not a single argument holds water. In most instances their title is based upon conquest. Yet after the Napoleonic and two World Wars British governments enforced the principle of returning spoils. Do they now repudiate this? There is limited truth that many artefacts, freely imported and collected, have become part of our heritage; but our Rembrandts and Michelangelos are not in dispute. This is not the thin end of any wedge. At issue are a few items in collections of sacred, ceremonial and historical objects, expropriated as a whole, often sacrilegiously, more often with the intention of destroying another culture than that of enriching our own.

The Elgin Marbles were torn from a greater whole, the temple designed by Phidias to commemorate the Battle of Marathon. They have survived in the BM, it is true, though at the cost of rendering unintelligible what remained of the Parthenon after the Venetian bombardment of 1687. The BM's stewardship is not unblemished. The display makes no sense of the programme and, in 1939, 40 pieces were scrubbed white, removing traces of the original paint, probably at the behest of Lord Duveen, the dealer who shipped so many British collections to the USA, and who paid for the dismal mausoleum in which they now languish.

When I put it to Wilson that there was a worthy precedent for reuniting a masterpiece in its original setting, namely Van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece, dispersed by sale (not even plunder) in the last century to museums in Berlin, Paris and Brussels, and then reassembled under article 247 of the Treaty of Versailles, he refused to discuss the case. No wonder! The extension of the principle to Elgin's Marbles must be hard for him to resist, especially since he condemns the current filching and illicit export of sculpture from Mayan temples. Does Wilson seriously contend that Elgin was more honourable than his modern counterparts because he took the whole rather than parts? Is it credible that Wilson can defend the reuniting of small parts of monuments but not major parts?

Finally, the legal obstacle is both an anomaly and a fiction. It is anomalous because it was arbitrary whether an object passed into the BM, protected by Clause 5, or into the V & A and the Royal Collections

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without it. The Mandalay Regalia were returned to Burma from the V & A in 1964, yet their galleries are not bare as a result. Abyssinian, Sri Lankan and Ashanti regalia have been returned by the Crown.

Clause 5 is a legal fiction because the BM itself returns objects, under the pretext that they are duplicates, when it suits them – an Ethiopian manuscript in 1872, 25 Benin bronzes in 1950/51, and recently some Indian Amaravati sculptures. The *New Statesman* can announce that as a result of cordial negotiations the BM will almost certainly return more Benin objects and the beard of the Sphinx in the near future. There is no legal obstacle to the long-term loan of the Elgin Marbles to Athens nor to the return of a caryatid and piece of entablature to the Erechtheion, which, as minor parts of a monument, are covered by Wilson's criteria.

France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Australia and New Zealand have got credit for returning objects, and even South Africa has returned to Harare the Bird of Zimbabwe purloined by Cecil Rhodes. The legalistic, dog-in-a-manger, imperialist attitude of the British authorities makes it seem that they are intent upon re-enacting the humiliation of formerly subjugated countries by forcing them to crawl on their hands and knees for an act of Britannic charity. Moreover this problem is not, as Wilson recognizes, going to disappear when Melina Mercouri is no longer around.

The advocates of return have no desire to despoil collections which in our multiracial society could play a major role in fostering respect for other cultures. This great moral purpose, which motivated some of the founders, benefactors, and many present students of our museums, is not well served unless the complementary principle of return is publicly endorsed and acted upon. □

MUSIC
Andrew Clements

Sound world

BBC College Concerts
Radio 3; further broadcasts 22, 29 May, 5 June

The series title may no longer be appropriate – recordings now take place in BBC studios rather than the London music colleges – but the College Concerts currently being put out on Sunday evenings still represent the BBC's most unequivocal contribution to new music. Given before an invited audience, they are unencumbered by the need to build marketable programmes and with the resources of the BBC Symphony Orchestra at hand. The BBC Symphony Orchestra now shares the series with the London Sinfonietta, and the consequent mixture of large and small-scale works is adventurous. Such relative open-mindedness necessarily breeds the occasional failure, but the present series contains several British premières of significant scores as well as reviving works neglected for a number of years.

For all their inclusiveness, the College Concerts have their own particular profile; there are a number of composers whose music would be unknown in Britain were it not for consistent appearances in this showcase. Two of these are York Höller and Tristan Murail, who have been represented by substantial pieces this season: Höller's *Umbra* for orchestra and four-track tape seems at first to be organised into coarse-grained gestures, but reveals a considerable subtlety of texture at a local level; Murail's *Gondwana* is less straightforward, and much more interesting.

Murail is still in his twenties, a pupil of Messiaen who appeared at the 1982 Proms playing the electronic *ondes martenot* in his teacher's *Turangalîla* Symphony. In last year's College Concerts there was the first British performance of his *Mémoire-Erosion* for horn and chamber orchestra, a skilful transposition of the sound characteristics of electronic music – its modes of attack and decay, its harmonic colouring – to purely instrumental writing. The sound world seemed fresh and original, though it appeared to mask a sensibility that was drawn to the large-scale romantic gesture, to the 'big' effect.

In *Gondwana* both these traits are developed more thoroughly. The title is taken from the geological name for the theoretical primeval landmass that is reckoned to have generated the continents of the southern hemisphere, and this mingling of prehistory and myth has a heady romanticism about it that Murail could well have inherited from Messiaen. In the orchestral work, everything pivots around a sequence of vast, torrential climaxes, and the atmosphere is charged with a sense of fearful mystery. It is unusually tactile music, and the influence of electronic treatment gives the textures a fascinating deliquescence difficult to categorise.

Here, it seems to me, Murail takes his electronic effects beyond the straightforward properties of manipulated sound employed in *Mémoire-Erosion*. In the fragmentary, whirling complexes there is more than a hint of Boulez's *Répons;* the splintering of a single colour into computer-analysed elements is mirrored in Murail's glittering webs, in which the distinction between musical sound and noise is most fruitfully blurred. The result is a score of great surface attractiveness; how well it survives repeated hearings remains to be seen.

NEW MUSIC by British composers is not well served this year. But Oliver Knussen's precociously accomplished second symphony is due in a later broadcast, and already two substantial pieces by Birtwistle and Maxwell Davies have been revived. In the case of Birtwistle's *Melencolia I* revival is hardly necessary, for it has established itself in the last half dozen years as a considerable addition to the clarinettist's solo repertory and as almost the archetypal Birtwistle score in its steady burgeoning from the single repeated tone of the opening, the crabbed lyricism of the writing for string orchestra and the angularly expressive clarinet lines threaded through the accompaniment.

Davies's *St Michael Sonata* for 17 wind instruments was, however, a real and welcome novelty, for it's a piece much quoted in studies of the composer but rarely performed. It was written in 1957, shortly after Davies left Manchester, and twins the major influences of his first period – the material and procedures of medieval music and the idiom of total serialism, of Nono in particular. In the sonata, fragments of plain-chant are used to generate instrumental passages of savage intensity. Some have the grains of a dramatic flair in the climaxes, a germ that would develop over more than a decade into the opera *Taverner* (of which much more in a few weeks' time). Yet the sonata remains an implacable piece, austerely prescriptive and unlovable. Davies followed it with an orchestral work, *Prolation,* equally rebarbative and equally in need of revival. It would be an ideal choice for a future College Concert; no other platform could do it more justice, or worry less about its lack of box-office charisma. □

THEATRE
Benedict Nightingale

The peace party

The Trojan War Will Not Take Place
JEAN GIRAUDOUX *Lyttelton*
Other Worlds
ROBERT HOLMAN *Royal Court*
Noel and Gertie
SHERIDAN MORLEY *Kings Head*
Much Ado About Nothing
SHAKESPEARE *Barbican*

The battle scars that Giraudoux received at the Dardanelles in 1915 are visible all over his **Trojan War,** explaining its authority, its power and also, perhaps, its limitations. Again and again it insists on what the Sassoons and Owens came to believe too: that the bloodthirsty ones are not the fighting men but the civilians at home, egging them on to glories whose actual squalor they cannot begin to understand.

Demokos, poet and leader of the Trojan senate, spends the play composing chauvinist anthems and dispensing inflammatory rhetoric. War, for him, is vastly preferable to losing 'honour', face. King Priam seems to think that peace is dangerous, because it makes the population soft, idle, decadent. It is left to Hector, who has just returned from a long, gory and exhausting campaign, to put the case against war with the Greeks and, indeed, against any war. In his enlightened mouth, a victory speech becomes partly an attack on an activity he considers 'sordid, hypocritical', partly a confession of the guilt many of Giraudoux's generation

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felt at surviving their less fortunate comrades. Anything, anything at all to prevent another war.

For him, this means telling lies, bearing humiliations, even killing an unarmed man. As the supportive Andromache puts it, it's better to seem a coward to others and secure peace than to be a coward to yourself and achieve war. For Hector, it also means exercising all his considerable skill as debater and diplomat; and out of this comes the argument and conflict that makes the play the remarkably complete piece of work it is. Every relevant point of view is paraded for our inspection, up to and including the dark, unsettling brand of Darwinism ascribed to the visiting Ulysses. For him, war is nature's way of choosing between two civilisations and cultures which have attained roughly equivalent strength; and, when its time has come, the tiniest, most peripheral incident may ignite it.

Thus the assassination of a mid-European princeling in Sarajevo set British and French against German and killed ten million young men, Giraudoux's friends and comrades among them. Thus a last-gasp misunderstanding, whose full irony it would be a pity to reveal here, manages to launch a thousand ships, raze Troy's walls and leave Priam and most of his family dead. It is inevitable but also, suggests Giraudoux, infinitely regrettable: we must struggle to stop the unstoppable, whatever the cost. At this point we realise we are listening to a man looking forward with dread as well as backward with pain. The play was written in 1935, by which time a resurgent and bellicose Germany was readying itself to seize the Rhineland; and in it one catches the perilously alluring smell of appeasement. It was, of course, natural for Giraudoux to read his experience of the First World War into the prospect of a Second, especially as the combatants were always likely to be the same. It isn't so easy for us, knowing Hitler rather better, to belong to the peace party.

Still, it could be argued that *The Trojan War* has grown in aptness in recent years, given the competition both ideological and military between our contemporary counterparts of Greece and Troy; and, if so, the National has done well to revive it, in however cool and restrained a way. Harold Pinter's production, its style suggesting an amalgam of French classical tragedy and one of Shaw's dramatic talk-ins, won't be to everyone's taste; and I myself spent much of the first half boggling in disbelief at Martin Jarvis's Hector, whose eye, voice, smile, everything suggested hardly more experience of mud and massacre than you'd get from lead soldiers in a soggy sandpit. But his temperature rose in the second half, and with it that of a production able also to boast an urbane and knowing Ulysses in Barry Foster, a fine, wry Hecuba in Annette Crosbie and, in Nicola Pagett, a Helen who manages to be languid, aloof, teasing, tantalising, and generally and appropriately reminiscent of the gynaecology of Pinter's own oeuvre. By the end I, for one, felt the electricity fizzing round my mental and moral centres as rarely in the modern theatre.

Robert Holman has brought the art of the short story to the theatre, presenting us with such terse, atmospheric and thoroughly enjoyable pieces as *German Skerries* and *Rooting*. It would be nice to welcome into their ranks the more obviously ambitious **Other Worlds,** since it too offers some beguiling observation of rural Yorkshire, this time the North Riding as it was in Napoleonic times. The fishermen are at feud with the farmers. Two star-crossed lovers come inarticulately together in the no-man's-land between the battle lines. A child is born, then seemingly orphaned. Oh yes, and a monkey survives a shipwreck, only to be hanged by the peasantry as an invading Frenchman. The action or (often) inaction veers between 1797 and 1777, allowing Paul Copley and Rosemary Leach to age, unage and re-age, and Juliet Stevenson to play both mother and daughter; and, thanks to their quality, I was never actually bored. But the feeling persists that a subject has been stretched too far, too long, too thin.

Noel and Gertie, meaning Coward and Lawrence, is a song-saturated tale of private lives and *Private Lives*, entertainingly confronting but not quite overcoming a big problem, which is that its protagonists saw each other rather seldom. And Terry Hands's **Much Ado,** with Sinead Cusack and Derek Jacobi as the not-dissimilar couple at its centre, is even better than I recall it at Stratford last year: witty, sentient, touching. There aren't many Beatrices who, in their anger and distress, can make a gnarled old critic sniff and gulp; but Ms Cusack, who is rapidly becoming the RSC's new superstar, brought off the feat. □

FILMS
Francis Wheen

Love's labour

Passion (15)
Camden Plaza
Eureka (18)
Screen on the Hill; Odeon, High St Kensington
Handgun (18)
ABCs Fulham Rd, Shaftesbury Ave

Love him or loathe him, you can't accuse Jean-Luc Godard of being unwilling to talk about his work. He has made a video called *Scénario du film Passion,* shown on Channel 4 last week, in which he says that **Passion** is 'a film about people deserting each other and going back home'. Meanwhile, in the current issue of *Sight and Sound,* he announces that the purpose of *Passion* is 'to bear witness to the grandeur of the ordinary'.

Stirring stuff; yet one continues to harbour a worrying suspicion that there may be less to Godard than meets the eye (or ear, for that matter). He has a facility for turning out grand-sounding phrases; when they are stripped of their rhetoric, however, there often seems to be disturbingly little left.

Perhaps the most prominent theme of *Passion* – as Godard himself has said – is the connection between work and love. A film director called Jerzy (Jerzy Radziwilowicz) is making a movie in which actors and actresses create *tableaux vivants* of famous paintings. Given that Godard has said that Jerzy's film-making should be seen as no more than a metaphor for work, and given Godard's equation between work and love, what follows is no surprise. Jerzy tries to seduce hotel-owner Hanna (Hanna Schygulla) into appearing in his film, but she replies: 'The work which you're asking me to do, it's too close to love.'

In case we missed the point, we are shown Jerzy and Hanna sitting alone together. Beside them, a video is playing a recording of Hanna's audition. 'To love, to work, to love. Show me the difference', Jerzy says to Hanna, as they half-watch the video. 'It's the same thing.' As he strokes her shoulder, the telephone rings: Jerzy angrily informs the caller that he is 'working'. Nice work if you can get it, one is tempted to reply.

Where does all this lead us? Precisely nowhere; partly because the point is made in such a heavy-handed manner but, more importantly, because Godard fails to prove his point. Jerzy's attempt at a double seduction of Hanna may indicate that there is indeed some link between love and work in the cinema – as Godard's own experience with Anna Karina in the 1960s suggested – but as a metaphor it cannot usefully be applied to many forms of work. The other main character in *Passion,* Isabelle (wonderful Isabelle Huppert), having been sacked from her factory job, invades the factory floor, shouting that she wants to work. But this does not mean that she loves her work, or that she loves while working; in fact, love (of a kind) comes only after she has taken up with the ubiquitous Jerzy. Godard has said that in *Passion* he wanted 'to say, and to see, that there is romance in labour'. Not proven, according to the verdict of this court.

Fortunately, although Godard's political and philosophical ideas are often trite or bogus, in cinematic matters he is still energetically inventive. He has made what he describes as a 'democratic' film in which, at any given time, about a dozen things are happening at once. If you don't care for the *plat du jour* there is still much on which you can feast; if you can't stomach the comings, try the goings. There is a succession of stunning images and sounds, greatly enhanced by exemplary performances from the cast and extraordinary camera-work from Raoul Coutard, working with Godard for the first time since *Weekend.* There is comedy, too: Hanna's moment of rapture in an absurdly luxuriant greenhouse; a hotel maid practising gymnastic contortions; an aggrieved debtor chasing the bronchial factory owner; the clatter of horses weaving round Jerzy's set.

We are given large intravenous doses of sensuality, largely through the music (Mozart to the fore) and the *tableaux vivants.* These have the intended effect, just as 'Abide With Me' can be guaranteed to make me cry; but aren't they being used to

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distract the audience from the essential hollowness of the film? I left the cinema feeling ravished; it was only later that I felt I'd been had.

WHICH brings one conveniently to **Eureka,** a film that seems to be in a similar line of business. As usual, Roeg has surrounded his film with a protective wall of cultural allusions: this time we get *Erewhon, Citizen Kane,* Edgar Allan Poe's *Eureka* and (more obliquely) *The Tempest.* Behind this barrier, the movie itself is about the idea that (wait for it) money doesn't buy happiness – or, as the production notes choose to put it, that 'vast quantities of wealth are no guarantee of inward peace'.

Apart from stuffing his films with literary references, one of Roeg's other favourite tricks is the copious use of parallelism; here again he doesn't miss his chance. The first part of the film is set in the white wilderness of the Yukon, where a gold prospector named Jack McCann (Gene Hackman) lies in the snow, all hope abandoned, frozen almost to death, while three wolves prowl around him. But he has one last try and (eureka!) he discovers gold – tons of the stuff.

We leap forward by 20 years. Jack is a dissatisfied squillionaire living on a private Caribbean island. Towards the end of the movie, his three main enemies (the mafia, his financial adviser and his playboy son-in-law) enter his house and prowl around: those three wolves again, geddit? When they've given him the treatment with a flame-thrower he looks just as he did when he was freezing in the Yukon. To complete the echo, they shower him with pillow-feathers which (surprise, surprise) resemble falling snow. The only purpose of all these parallels is to show that McCann had effectively died at his moment of eureka all those years ago. But this has already been said umpteen times in the film; Roeg's labouring of the point suggests that he has nothing to add.

Sorry to be such an old misery, but I didn't much care for **Handgun** either. Through his work in Britain, Tony Garnett has come to be seen, quite rightly, as one of our leading social realist film-makers. Now, however, he has gone to the Land of Opportunity. At first, *Handgun* looks as if it will be a typically Garnettish exposé of the gun-crazy frontier state of Texas. A schoolteacher (Karen Young) is raped by a Colt-toting young lawyer (Clayton Day). She cuts her hair short (echoes of *Taxi Driver*) and, after enrolling with a gun-club, soon becomes a useful shot. She then plans her revenge . . .

Garnett's semi-improvised technique is as compelling as in any of his docu-dramas, but his purpose is less so. Although he introduces a clever twist at the end, it isn't enough to clear him of the charge that he is espousing much of the morality of vigilante movies – the playing of Harry Nilsson's 'Lay Down Your Arms' over the closing credits sounds like an attempt to make amends, but it's too late. God, guns and guts? I doubt if the earlier Garnett would have approved. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

On the rocks

ON MONDAY and Tuesday last week it was possible to see Danger Man meet Shoestring in the first full-length commercial for a new range of toiletries called **Jamaica Inn** (ITV). Implausibly set sometime during the last century, it was inter-cut with various tough little domestic satires and repeats of the Whiskas Catfood Show from Aberdeen. Jane Seymour, fresh from her bath in an earlier commercial, was obvious casting for the model. I was less happy with the two brothers. A full-dress scar suspended from his eye like a piece of chewing gum was the clue to a heady, Robert Newtonesque outing from Danger Man. In shambles Shoestring, smiling, dégagé, having dressed and acted down for the occasion.

If this was an ad for hair conditioner, he might as well repeat his portrayal of the easy-going investigator from the commercial radio station. Alas, he was reckoning without his brother's alarming psychological exploration of Long John Silver. Did they rehearse together? Or was it thought unlucky, like seeing the bride before a wedding? Maybe the conflicting approaches to reality were designed to give the action a 'layered' look?

Reviews of Miss Seymour's hair have been unfair. To criticise its strange glossiness, cleanliness, neatness and length is to miss the point of the *Jamaica Inn* range altogether, designed as it is expressly for heavy location work. As everyone knows, commercial photographers often use different products from the one being advertised – egg, milk and spit are popular – to get the right effect. So what? Squeaky-clean, fluffed-up and dew-sprinkled, Jane's hair was the result of much selfless cable-clearing from the humbler elements of her make-up crew. 'Mary Yellan', people kept saying, 'what are you doing out alone on Bodmin Moor at this hour? You're soaked to the skin.' One glance at her hair and it didn't seem to matter. (I was relieved to read in the *TV Times* that Jane had been wearing a wet suit under her performance throughout shooting.)

A further witty modernisation of the *Jamaica Inn* trade mark was that of having the wreckers operate during broad daylight in order to save money. Did this suggest the tragic tendency of certain people to go willingly on to the rocks in mid-life? Or was it a holocaust metaphor? It worked well, I thought, up to the point where we see the ship out at sea. If we can see them so clearly, how come they can't see the donkey walking along the horizon carrying the decoy-flame? The solution was obvious, but effective. When we cut to the view from the ship's bridge, we simply shoot later at night. 'Come in, my darlings', croaks Danger Man like a demented boat-pond keeper, 'these beautiful rocks are waiting for you!' Apparently they wrecked a real old sailing ship while on location. Why didn't they do it in the film? 'CARNAGE!!!' people kept assuring us as actors swarmed over the beached Birch Grove. I remember the inn sign in the old black-and-white version having more carnage in its creak than this literal-minded mob could put together.

Period melodramas like this positively screech for low technology. The high pain threshold Mary Quant look doesn't exist in real life, let alone *Jamaica Inn.* Monochrome, on the other hand, is pitched convincingly somewhere between hot print and cold technicolour; you can almost believe in it. 'Why don't we just creep away now?' asked Mary Yellan at one point. Why not indeed? Only if we are persuaded that these women have no alternative but to put up with all the blood and nonsense do we have a possible basis for horror. I know these were the days when women who ran off to make skin-care commercials were frowned on by society, but this bunch, with their wildly differing notions of reality, were walking question marks, begging everything unpleasant in sight. You just knew that if dew-drop Jane caught Danger Man carrying on like that in a real commercial she'd split her face-pack.

It must be one of God's laws of diminishing returns that people with most desire to do things shall be those with least ability to do them. **Everyman** (BBC-1) had a jolly little show in which five American missionaries dropped Bible tracts, buttons and pictures of themselves (not nice) into the otherwise cheerful world of the Amazonian Aucas. 'We like you, we like you', they yelled, from which the Aucas concluded they were cannibals and killed them. A just war, you might say. But missionaries are of their nature randy for tribulation and a couple of relatives decided to go back with tear-gas and guns, 'in reckless abandon for the Lord', to have another go at making friends. 'The Aucas believe in a god, but they do nothing about it', said one. 'My definition of religion is that you do something about it. They had no abstract terms, so we asked God to give us wisdom to think of alternative words.' It sounded just as if she was getting to work reinterpreting literature for TV.

Here was the classic pollution of a way of life by the deadly germ of guilt, polio and the Great American Oil Slick. 'The Aucas have various warped legends', allowed the woman, as if her audience was solidly behind her, 'but Polygamy is rampant. The polio epidemic was as if all the scum of Auca culture had risen to the surface.' It seems these horrid women are national heroes back home. One of them appeared on **This is Your Life.** By her side was a lost-looking Auca girl brought back alive as a reward for submission, struggling visibly to take in the third-hand abstract disaster zone of modern America and her chances, if any, of surviving in it. □

John Coleman will be back next week

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WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2771 Set by F. R. Spofforth

Lord Longford revealed last weekend that he had sent his son to Belvedere College in Ireland because 'I wanted him to have some Irish background early on – James Joyce and Terry Wogan are both ex-pupils'. The mind boggles. We'll give you a choice: *either* an end-of-term report on Wogan or Joyce, *or* a transcript of Joyce's appearance on Wogan's chat show. 150 words max: by 2 June (we're out early in election week).

No 2768 Set by D. H. Cudmore

Alliterative verse.

Report By Al Dente

No room for me to do anything but doff my hat to Bellenger's grand achievement. A tenner to him, eight to the others.

If I should snuff it, sensitively say:
That there's some silent top-soil overseas
Shall still be solely Saxon. There shall stay
In that sweet sod, a sweeter sod at ease;
A sod some Saxons spawned, schooled, sought to sow,
Sent out, snowdrops to smell, and streets to stride,
A Saxon stiff, sniffed Saxon breezes blow,
By streams sluiced, in its houses safe inside.

Sense this, this soul, its sins so simply cast
Aside, a sliver of the cosmic scheme,
Sends back the Saxon sentiments that blessed it:
Their shapes and sighs; their snooze that's seldom past;
And spoofs that schoolboys share; a soothing dream
For souls 'neath Saxon starscapes, surely rested.

WILL BELLENGER

Now for the country they entrain,
Eyes ignited, nerves astrain,
The crank, the cunning and the kind,
The man of 'nose', the man of mind,
The bounder and the business man,
The nit, the Norman Tebbit fan,
The frank, the phoney and the bent,
The nice, the neuter and the spent,
The cynic nauseous with scorn,
The nervous (with his bounds re-drawn),
Nit-pickers, ministers and sinners,
Connoisseurs of London dinners,
Ancient saints and near-baboons,
Each one of them his nerve attunes.
It's nudging near; the night is soon
Of Nemesis, the ninth of June.

GEORGE SIMMERS

On a numb morning in mid-Manhattan
I'm comatose, mesmerised, immobile
among somnambulant masses. Maybe,
I muse, I'll have a Michelob at Macy's.

A mall at Manassas means fleamarket
memorabilia: old maps, muskets
and moulded ammunition from the war.
Mere remains, or Armageddon omens?

The mountains loom like a massive mural.
Where their mild streams meet the Piedmont margin
a motorist manipulates a gas pump –
a Moloch-man, milking Mother Nature.

In Massachusets I am reminded
of Herman Melville, mystic Moby Dick,
Emerson, the Lyceum, multitudes
of millennial American Dreamers.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

FIRST PERSON

Jeremy Lewis

Dressing the part

REVIEWERS of Theodore Zeldin's recent book on the French have made much of the great gulf set between the stereotyped Frenchman of the kind familiar from the Sealink ads – an ogling, saucer-eyed villain in a beret with curling moustaches and a stick of bread locked firmly under his armpit – and the real-life Frog of today, a generally clean-shaven gentleman who apparently gave up wearing berets some time in the 1930s. A French equivalent of Dr Zeldin, a Pierre Daninos or an André Maurois *de nos jours* returning to England after some years' absence, could hardly fail to notice the sudden disappearance of that most endearing symbol of Englishness, the bowler hat. The City is still full of pin-striped, red-faced men tucking into treacle pud in their lunch hours, and the commuters still stream in from Orpington and Paddocks Wood, occasionally storming train drivers' cabs with raised umbrellas when subjected to further delays on the 8.10; but there is hardly a bowler hat to be seen in the Threadneedle Street or the Waterloo Station of today. Some scientists believe that the mighty dinosaurs were blotted out overnight by a visiting meteor or a vast convulsion of the earth, and a similar fate appears to have overtaken this noble item of headgear.

The fact that Englishmen no longer wear bowler hats will not, of course, make the slightest difference to those for whom easily identified stereotypes are part of their bread and butter. As national, regional, class and occupational differences in the way we look and dress are steadily diluted, the cartoonist and the travel agent and the writer of television comedies gratefully seize upon such eccentricities as remain, however dated or absurd. Children's comics are heavily staffed with tweeded schoolmasters in gowns and mortar boards swishing their canes in the air, and burglars bustling about their business in black and white matelots' vests with fancy-dress masks and bulging sacks slung over their shoulders conveniently labelled 'Swag'; and it seems a fair bet that Major Thompson, with his military moustache and Savile Row suit and well-brushed hat, will be representing hatless and jean-clad Englishmen for years to come, despite his advanced years and sadly arthritic condition.

For stuffies like myself, the Case of the Vanishing Bowler is a subject of melancholy regret, for by disposing of his hat the City man has shed part of his familiar uniform and can no longer be distinguished from other men in the street. Uniforms, formal or informal, came under heavy fire during the decade we love to hate, the well-meaning but feeble-minded 1960s. In an age in which vicars vainly strove to curry favour with their flocks by revving up motor bikes outside their churches and installing coffee bars and amplifiers within, and public schoolboys fought to conceal their accents beneath a strangled and uneasy blend of bogus Cockney and bogus Bronx, uniforms were inevitably spurned as emblems of hierarchy, authority and general stodginess of spirit. Only the armed forces and the law remained immune as mortar boards, dog collars, lawn sleeves, nuns' wimples and mayoral robes were consigned to attics, jumble sales or children's dressing-up boxes. Those who clung to their items of fancy dress were considered pompous (rightly so, in many cases), reactionary and likely to harbour unsavoury designs on the body politic. All this took place at a time when uniforms as such were curiously popular, provided they weren't worn by the people for whom they were designed: Beatles in guardsmen's jackets were thought an A1 joke and a subversive crack at the Establishment, though the spoilsport soldiers failed to chime in with the spirit of the age by wearing sandals or smoking on parade.

Yet the truth of the matter is that most people rather enjoy and approve of uniforms of one kind or another – and not only because they add a touch of colour and variety, or because some folk like dressing up and feeling self-important. Uniforms are a kind of social lubricant or shorthand, enabling us to place and recognise one another easily and efficiently. Most people, I suspect, *like* priests or policemen or railway porters to look (and play) the part, and no doubt it's easier for the chaps themselves to make the right impression if they're appropriately kitted out, whether as a milkman or a High Court judge, so avoiding being mistaken for a tramp with a hangover or the man next door and having to waste time explaining who they are.

A millionaire in a T-shirt may be hard to tell from a football fan similarly garbed; but all of us move in herds of one kind or another, and most of us – with minor variants – conduct ourselves like members of our own particular herd. Bowler hats and garlic-stained berets may have bitten the dust, but bovver boots and publishers' tweeds and Sloane Rangers' headscarves rule OK – and a good thing too, say I. □

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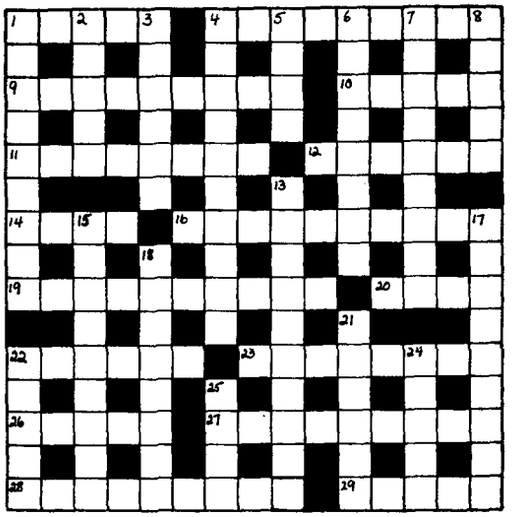

ACROSS

1. Author who takes us on the river. (5)
4. Machine for twisting rope in a narrow street. (9)
9. Second-half recovery for the side? (9)
10. Favour one who does art in an examination. (5)
11. Financial transaction included by Essex change bowler. (8)
12. Kind of imitation which brings money without measure. (6)
14. Credit given as sign of approval. (4)
16. Dance, thanks to rave girl. (10)
19. Tumbledown means of confining an animal. (10)
20. Exchange a seal. (4)
22. Fools mentioned in a note to a friend. (6)
23. Put underground outside city and away from coast. (8)
26. Where there is a contest you need a period in retreat. (5)
27. Using a brush causes a machine to make a sound. (9)
28. Distorted emphasis is distorted by name. (9)
29. Wise men measure time in seconds. (5)

DOWN

1. Officer and university teacher as novel hero. (9)
2. The alien makes me twitch. (5)
3. One lot of schoolchildren upset the master. (6)
4. For example, in a new political movement loyalty is expected. (10)
5. Light lines for fish. (4)
6. Shows which are period in costume. (8)
7. Religious leader makes a maid go without a sound. (9)
8. Eastern light providing a message for all. (5)
13. A dear lot of coal from a place not far from the pits. (10)
15. Place in the arrivals for pieces of equipment. (9)
17. It is like father to tease us with delicacy. (9)
18. Stroke makes Phil capsize in the rough water. (8)
21. Fades away although they are named after rocks. (6)
22. Working woman married for her attractiveness. (5)
24. Something sweet from the music in Grieg's piano concerto. (5)
25. Beat friends up. (4)

SETSQUARE

Appointment

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JAMAICAN LADY, 30, graduate, artistic interests, wishes to befriend a professional (country) gentleman (type), with developed, utilised European culture. Small photo, s.a.e. pref. please. Box 5971.

LADIES 25-35. If you like macho bores fine. If you need someone with a bit more (warmth, openness, intelligence, wit) try me. 29, graduate, travelled, arts interests, NME reader. Shropshire. Box 5995.

LONELY? Why not join London's Friendliest Singles Club, making new friends of all ages? City Circle. 01-914 2098 (9 a.m.-6 p.m.).

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SLIM, GOOD-LOOKING academic, seeks cultured lady friend, early forties. Box 5987.

SURREY LECTURER, unattached, needs affectionate, perceptive, 35-55 lady friend. Will telephone replies. Box 5998.

TALL, ATTRACTIVE woman, 34, seeks interesting, cultured, pref. divorced gentleman. Interested in art, food, politics and travel. SW London. Box 5972.

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LISTINGS

FRI 20 MAY

LONDON Women and children outside marriage. One-day seminar on social, legal & economic aspects of births outside marriage. Camden Centre, Camden Town Hall, Bidborough Street, WC1. Adm £15 (incl lunch). Creche. **Org National Council for One Parent Families 01-267 1361.**

LEAMINGTON 'Nuclear Freeze – The rise of the American Peace Movement'. Spkr Peter Pringle. 8pm Newbold Hall, Spa Centre. **Org END/WEST MIDLANDS CND. Contact David Lewis 021-632 6909.**

20-22 MAY DEVON Westland Revel – weekend of folk, peace & workshops. Proceeds to Exeter CND. **Ticket details: 0392 59935.**

SAT 21 MAY

LONDON 'Popular Planning for Social Need' Conf. Spkrs incl. B. Sherman, Audrey Wise. 11-5pm County Hall. **Details: CAITS 01-607 2789 x 2498.**

SOUTHALL Women's Peace Day 11-5.30pm incl protest at War bunker, Hamborough School, South Road. **Org Labour Party Women in Ealing, 2-4 King Street, Southall, Middx.**

LONDON Women, Peace and the Third World. Workshop/discns. 10am Jacksons Lane Community Centre, N6 (Highgate tube). Creche. Women only. **Details: Sue Shaw 01-263 9922.**

NORTH LONDON (N8) Preparation day-school for Upper Heyford blockade. 10-6pm. Adm £1/50p unwaged, incl evening social. Pls bring food for sharing. **Details: John Drane 01-281 0830. Org Hornsey CND.**

LONDON LCC Election Workshop: policies and campaigning for victory. 10.30-1pm, County Hall, SE1. Creche. **Details: 01-249 8276/01-471 1637.**

LONDON Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine: recalled First National Conf. **Postponed to 26 June.**

BRISTOL Non-violent direct action training session in preparation for mixed blockade of USAF Upper Heyford on 2 June. 10am-4pm Albany Centre, Montpelier, Bristol 6. **Details: Bristol 662579.**

GLASGOW 'The Isms of Politics'. Day conf. 2-5pm Dept of Adult & Continuing Education, 57-61 Oakfield Avenue, Glasgow 12. Fee £2. **Details: 041-239 8855 x 394.**

BRADFORD Women's Local History. Weekend conf. on themes peace & war; maternity & reproduction; politics & parties. £6.50 waged/£3 unwaged. Creche. **Details: Adult Education Centre, Bradford 487054.**

SUN 22 MAY

PAISLEY Fund-raising Rock Festival for Music Workshops for unemployed. Paisley Town Hall 11.45-4.30pm. Lots of bands. Adm £2.50/£1.50 unwaged. **Details Glenis Fyfe Bredland 6300.**

MON 23 MAY

LONDON Workshop 'The Really vital statistics'; 'Impropaganda'; 'A Student Award' 7pm upstairs, Black Horse, 109 Marylebone High Street, W1. All women welcome. **Org Women in Media. Details: Helen Franks 01-435 7772 (day only).**

KENT Public meeting on 'civil defence' plus details of Bexley borough's war plans. Spkr Dr Michael Barnett (Scientists against nuclear war). 8pm Erith Town Hall, Walnut Tree Road, Erith. **Org Bexley CND. Details: Trevor Richardson 01-300 7317.**

TUES 24 MAY

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FOR DISARMAMENT

SOUTHWARK Rally 11am Peckham Rye Park (mass grave). 12am Walk for Peace via Walworth Rd to Imperial War Museum; encircled at 2.30. 3-5pm Food/Theatre/Music at S. Bank Poly Union. Creches all venues plus kids' transport. **Org SE London Group. Details Nicola 01-639 8561.**

HORNSEY Vigil & Fast (candlelit singing) midnight (23rd) to midnight 24th outside Hornsey Town Hall. Embrace Prince of Wales Hospital 12.30-1.30pm. Demo: Wood Green Shopping Centre 2.00. Join Trafalgar Sq. Rally 6pm. **Details: Mary Corbishley 01-809 2131/Sue Wilkie 01-340 9978.**

DEVON & CORNWALL Plymouth 7-9am Tamar Bridge Linking; Bolt Head 4pm onwards – gathering; Culdrose 5pm onwards – gathering. **Details for area: Salcombe 2979 or Totnes 865281.**

BRIXTON Public forum: Colin Roach – we want the truth! 7.30pm Lambeth Town Hall. Spkrs incl Stoke Newington & Hackney Defence Campaign. **Org Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!**

BATTERSEA 'Defended to Death?' – issues in Nuclear Armament and Disarmament. Course org Battersea CND, Tues eves., begins with 'The effects of a nuclear attack: Hiroshima/Nagasaki, Civil Defence'. 7.30-9.30pm Junction Resource Centre, 248 Lavender Hill, SW11. **Details: Harry Zutshi 01-675 1913.**

WED 25 MAY

LONDON Open lecture: 'Towards the Demystification of Education'. Spkr Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. 6-8pm Elvin Hall (Level 1), Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, WC1. All Welcome. **Org Centre for Multicultural Education.**

LONDON Second Fred Tonge Memorial Lecture – Ralph Miliband on Marxism and the Labour Movement. **Postponed until 29 June.**

LONDON Meeting: 'The New Challenge'. Spkrs incl Lord Fenner Brockway, Prof Frank Barnaby, Michael Foot MP, the Bishop of Birmingham. 7.30pm Grand Committee Room, House of Commons, SW1. **Org World Disarmament Campaign 01-485 1067.**

LEWISHAM Public Meeting 'Racism Out! Anti-Racist Education In!' – Campaign to Fight Racism in Schools. Spkrs incl black parent, black youth worker, anti-racist teacher. 7.30pm Church Hall, 4 Algernon Road, 13. **Details: RLVC BM Box 2544 London, WC1N 3XX.**

EXETER Public Meeting on cruise. Spkr Dr John Shepherd. **Org Exeter CND. Details: 0392-59935.**

THURS 26 MAY

LONDON Planning meeting for 'Arms are for Linking', International Women's blockade at Greenham Common, 4-8 July. 'We need your help!' 7pm London Greenham Office, 5 Leonard St, EC2. **Contact 01-251 3133.**

ISLINGTON Public Meeting – 'Ireland & Labour'. Spkrs Ken Livingstone, Clive Soley. 7pm Islington Central Library, Holloway Road. **Org Islington S. Labour Party.**

FORTHCOMING

28 MAY London Conference on women in Chile for women in Britain. Woman spkr from inside Chile. Workshops, social. Open delegates from TUs/political parties, women's orgs & indiv women. 11-5pm, County Hall. **Org Chile Solidarity Campaign. Details Diane Dixon 01-272 4296.**

27-29 MAY Edinburgh First Scottish Women's Health Fair. Discns, stalls, films. West End and Princes St. Gardens, Edinburgh. **Org Scottish Health Education Group. Contact Berni Graham 031-229 4180/031-447 8044.**

28 MAY Bristol Public meeting. Spkrs: Fay Weldon, Zdena Tomin. 6pm The Folk House, 40 Park Street. Collection for END. **Contact Judith Eversley 0225-315480.**

28 MAY Manchester 'CND, Trade Unions & The Workplace'. 10.30-4pm, Manchester Town Hall. Creche. **Details: Laura Mitchell, Greater Manchester CND Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee. 061-682 9334.**

28 MAY Liverpool National March and Rally to protest against Cruel Experiments on Animals. **Details: Merseyside Animal Aid/BUAV 051-494 0470.**

30 MAY Scotland Torness Festival of Recreation. Music, theatre, stalls, food etc. 2-9pm Barnes Ness. Creche. **Org Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace 031-557 4283.**

30 MAY Bristol 2-day Bike Ride to Upper Heyford USAF blockade. Starts 10am Bristol (overnight stop at Fairford; tents carried by back-up van). Arr. Upper Heyford 6pm, 31 May. **Contact Ali, Bristol 553321.**

31 MAY-3 JUNE Upper Heyford Street musicians and entertainers needed to keep morale high at blockade. **Org Oxford CND. Details: 0865-726441.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE. EC1. 01-278 8916 (5 lines), cc groups 01-379 6061. **THE WELLS STAGECOACH** *before and after show bus service, phone* 80 for details.
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Publications

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THEOSOPHY: *S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 22 May 8 p.m. Informal/QA Meeting 'Life, Sleep, Death'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.*

German Historical Institute, London
Tuesday, 24 May
Prof. Dr. Volker Press (Tubingen)
The Estate System in Germany in the 16th and 17th Centuries
17 Bloomsbury Square London WC1A 2LP
Tea from 4.30 p.m.
Seminar starts at 5 p.m.

GENERAL ELECTION JUNE 9

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